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U.S. PRAISE FOR AMIRI INITIATIVES ON SECURITY, STABILITY

Tillerson due at Kuwait-hosted talks



Ambassador Lawrence Silverman

NewsWatch

Ban on recruitment of Filipinos 'stays'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Labor Secretary of the Philippines **Silvestre Bello III** has affirmed that the temporary ban on the deployment of Filipino workers to the country remains in effect, because the labor attaché submitted a "half-baked report" on the cause of deaths of seven Filipino household workers.

In a report published Monday on its website, The Manila Times quoted Bello as saying that the labor attaché failed to comply with a government requirement to submit an independent report on his investigation. He explained the findings were based on existing reports from the Philippine Labor Office (POLO) and Kuwait's Ministry of Interior.

He disclosed, "I requested our labor attaché to come up with his own findings, not the findings of two separate agencies." He is hoping for submission of the report within this week to decide whether to lift the temporary suspension on the issuance of overseas employment certificates (OEC) to Filipinos bound for Kuwait or declare a total ban.

— www.manilatimes.net

BAGHDAD: US forces have begun reducing their numbers in Iraq after Iraqi authorities declared "victory" over Islamic State, an Iraqi government spokesman said on Monday.

Iraqi forces backed by a US-led international coalition last year captured all the territory that fell under Islamic State control in 2014 and 2015, including the northern city of Mosul, which served as the militants' de facto capital.

"The American forces have begun reducing their numbers as victory has been achieved over DAESH," the spokesman told Reuters. "Coordination continues, to maintain (US) assistance to the Iraqi forces in accordance with their requirements." (RTRS)

KIRKUK: Iraqi forces are preparing an operation to consolidate control of an area near the Iran border to be used for the transit of Iraqi oil, two officials said on Monday, highlighting concern about mountainous terrain where two armed groups are active.

The operation to secure the Hamrin mountain range could start this week, they told Reuters. The area lies between the Kirkuk oil fields and the town of **Khanagiq** at the Iranian border. Iraqi oil officials announced in December plans to transport Kirkuk crude by truck to Iran's Kermanshah refinery.

The trucking was to start last week and oil officials declined to give reasons for the delay other than it was technical in nature. (RTRS)

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■	US\$/KD 0.29955/65
▼	Euro/KD 0.3722
■	Yen/KD 0.0027
▼	British £/KD 0.4203
▲	KSE +41.37 pts at closing Feb 5 See Page 29
▼	DOW -448.12 pts at 21:35 Feb 5 See Page 30
▼	Nasdaq -72.81 pts at 21:35 Feb 5
▼	FTSE -108.45 pts at closing Feb 5
▼	Nikkei -592.45 pts at closing Feb 5
▲	Gold \$1,333.60 per oz (London)
▼	NYMEX crude \$63.91 per barrel
▼	Brent crude \$67.51 per barrel
▼	3-month \$ LIBOR rate 1.78902%

By Cinatra Fernandes
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: "We have won much of the military effort against DAESH, the liberation of virtually all of Iraq and Syria, but we need to win the post-military struggle for an enduring defeat of DAESH and al-Qaeda in the region," US Ambassador Lawrence Silverman remarked at a press roundtable discussing the upcoming Kuwait International Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq and the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS, set to take place in Kuwait on Feb 12-14.

He announced that US Secretary of State, Rex Tillerson, will attend both events. The Conference for the Reconstruction of Iraq will seek out pledges and encourage private investment in Iraq to help people resume their normal lives with the resumption of services and economic activities af-

ter the devastation inflicted by ISIS; investing in stability is regarded as the means to ensure lasting defeat.

Ambassador Silverman praised the initiatives undertaken by HH the Amir, Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, to not only ensure the security of Kuwait but bring greater stability and security to the region. He shared that Kuwait has played an "out-sized" role in undertaking similar conferences such as the Donor conferences for Syria and its humanitarian contributions. He shared that Kuwait's initiative fits very well with its assumption of a seat as a non-permanent in the UN Security Council.

With parliamentary elections coming up in May, the reconstruction will play a big role in determining political stability in Iraq. Ambassador Silverman shared that a good result from the conference will enable the people of Iraq to see that the world is with them and that there is a real and viable path to reconstruction in areas destroyed or terrorised by the DAESH. "The Iraqi people look to the upcoming conference as an opportunity for them, the Iraqi government has worked closely with the World Bank in preparing for this conference and Kuwait has been helpful by hosting the event and helping structure this event in such a way that the Iraqi government will be able to present it-

self, its projects, ideas and what it promises to do, to reconstruct with the help of the international community."

Ambassador Silverman underscored the role of the private sector investors to meet the high reconstruction needs of Iraq and shared that there is a strong interest from American companies with over 100 participating in the conference. "It is the job of the Iraqi government to create the opportunities and facilitate those investments. They have here a great opportunity and a great responsibility here in Kuwait to present the very large number of investors, US and others, with very concrete projects and detailed means of how the government will make it both easy and secure for them to make these investments."

He shared that the US had provided Iraq \$1.7 billion in humanitarian assistance, \$115 million in stabilisation assistance, \$100 million to clear mines and explosives, as well as \$1 billion in sovereign loan guarantees and plans to give \$150 million for stability through the UN this year. He also pointed out that the US is the biggest figure in the IMF and the programme will provide over 5 billion in budget support for Iraq.

Addressing concerns regarding the endemic corruption in Iraq, Ambassador Silverman shared that the issue was a major

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HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah during the opening ceremony of Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre.

Amir inaugurates Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah inaugurated Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre at Shaab area on Monday evening.

His Highness the Amir was received upon his arrival by Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah and Director of Financial and Administrative Affairs at Amiri Diwan Abdulaziz Ishaq.

Sheikh Ali, addressing the ceremony, said Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre was a scientific, cultural and

historic monument, which displayed the past and present as well as illustrated a future vision.

The centre was named after late Amir Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Al-Sabah "the founder of modern development of our beloved nation," he said.

The centre, said Sheikh Ali, was implemented by the Amiri Diwan and subjected to legal and auditing scrutiny.

Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre, to be run by trained Kuwaitis, is an addition to development and civilized

projects implemented under the rule of His Highness the Amir, added Sheikh Ali.

The minister thanked the Ministries of Education and Information for their "important contributions" to the centre.

The inauguration ceremony was attended by His Highness the Crown Prince Sheikh Nawaf Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah, Parliament Speaker Marzouq Al-Ghanim, Sheikh Jaber

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Iran accused

Saudis down missile

RIYADH, Feb 5, (Agencies): Saudi air defences intercepted a ballistic missile fired at the kingdom by Yemen's Shiite Houthi rebels on Monday, state media reported.

The attack was launched from Yemen's northern governorate of Saada, a Houthi stronghold, and "intercepted" at 7:23 local time (0423 GMT), Colonel Turki al-Maliki told state news agency SPA.

Maliki, spokesman for the Saudi-led military coalition supporting the government in Yemen, said the missile was headed toward the city of Khamis Mushait — about 160 kms (100 miles) north of the border.

Riyadh had warned that "Iranian-manufactured ballistic weapons" threatened the kingdom's security following an attack it said was intercepted near Riyadh airport in November.

Maliki on Monday accused the Houthis of "repeatedly targeting densely populated cities" and accused the kingdom's regional rival Iran of delivering the weapons to the insurgents.

The coalition has been blacklisted by the UN for the killing and maiming of children in air raids on Yemen.

The United States, which backs the Saudi campaign against the Houthis, has also accused Iran of being at the origin of the ballistic missiles, a charge denied by Tehran.

Russia said last week that evidence presented by the US was inconclusive, signalling it would oppose a bid to slap UN sanctions on Tehran.

More than 9,200 people have been killed since the Saudi-led alliance joined the Yemen war in March 2015, according to the World Health Organisation,

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Iran 'urges' Turkey to end offensive in Syria

LONDON, Feb 5, (Agencies): Iran urged Turkey on Monday to stop its military offensive in Syria, saying the operation in the northern Afrin region breached Syrian sovereignty and would increase tension in the war-damaged country.

Turkey last month launched an air and ground campaign, dubbed Operation Olive Branch, against the Kurdish



A Lebanese-Kurdish woman takes part in a demonstration in front of the US embassy in Aaoukar, north of Beirut, to protest against the ongoing Turkish offensive in the Syrian-Kurdish enclave of Afrin on Feb 5. (AFP)

YPG militia in Afrin.

"Turkey should stop its operation and respect Syria's sovereignty and territorial integrity," Iranian foreign ministry spokesman Bahram Qasemi was quoted as saying by state news agency IRNA.

"Turkey's actions can bring back insecurity, instability and terrorism to Syria," he added.

Qasemi said any solution to the Syrian crisis should be discussed in talks in the Kazakh capital Astana that are sponsored by Russia, Iran, and Turkey.

He said Iran was in continuous talks with both Turkey and Russia about the latest developments in Syria.

Russia and Iran back Syria's President Bashar al-Assad, while Turkey supports Assad's opponents.

Ankara considers the US-backed YPG, which controls Afrin, to be a terrorist group and an extension of the Kurdistan Workers Party (PKK) which has fought an insurgency

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Proposals on energy set

Panel focus on environment

By Abubakar A. Ibrahim
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: MP Khalil Al-Saleh has presented a bill on the leave days of employees.

Article One of the bill states that the second paragraph of Article 23 of Decree No. 15/1979 will be replaced with the following text: "Periodic leave is not be granted unless six months have passed from the date of accepting the work. The periodic salary shall be paid at the time of work. If the available periodic leave exceeds 30 days, the employee has the right to cash days beyond this period — maximum 200 days — in line with the conditions and regulations set by the Civil Service Commission (CSC)."

In the explanatory note of the bill, the lawmaker pointed out that vacation is one of the basic employee rights guaranteed by the law; hence, the need to protect this right. He explained one way of protecting this right is to allow the employee to cash unused leave days, considering he decided to work rather than going on vacation. He said prohibiting the employee from cashing unused leave days is a violation of the original part of the rights and freedom of workers.

He added this right should also be granted to those employed in military sectors, such that the employees covered by the CSC Law are equal to their counterparts in the military in accordance with the principle of equality among citizens as stipulated in the Constitution.

In another development, the parliamentary Environment Affairs Committee approved Monday some proposals on renewable energy and declaration of Environment Day in the country.

Representatives of several competent and relevant authorities attended the meeting.

Committee Rapporteur MP Mohamed Hadi Al-Huwailah disclosed the approved proposals include searching for alternative

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Kuwait keen on protecting the rights of foreign labour force

Customer Service Award contributes to state dev plan: Al-Sabeeh

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5, (KUNA): Out of its respect for human rights, Kuwait is keen on protecting the labor force working on its soil, said Deputy Director General of the Public Authority for Manpower Abdullah Al-Mutautah on Monday.

Since its establishment in 2013, the Authority worked on regulating the labor market according to laws in civil and private sectors and in light of Kuwait's commitment to international human rights agreements, as well as the ones of the In-

ternational Labor Organization (ILO), Al-Mutautah told a host of diplomatic mission representatives in the country.

Moreover, Kuwait had signed a series of agreement in this regard, including 19 of the ILO, he noted, pointing out that Kuwait had gone a long way as far as labor-related legislations were concerned.

Despite the fact that the old 1964 law on labor regulations was "distinguished" on the Arab level, yet, Kuwait saw that an updated version of the law was necessary, in order for the country to keep up with developments and match its current international status, he said. The original enactment of the labor law was in 1964 to regulate the work force in the private sector. The amended

2011 version came mainly to ensure a fair treatment for all blue-collared jobs.

The law contains all essential rules and regulations that an employee needs to know before accepting a contract. It also contains significant guidelines and procedures that the employer should follow to make sure that an individual is a competent worker and is authorized to work in Kuwait.

The meeting was attended by diplomatic representatives of France, the Netherlands, Egypt, Indonesia, Thailand, Nepal, the Philippines, as well as ILO.

Meanwhile, Minister of Social Affairs and Labour Hind Al-Sabeeh said that state sponsorship of the Public Relations and Customer Service Award stems from its importance to human development, one of the

"Kuwait 2035" vision's two main pillars.

The prize, organised by the non-profit Kuwait Public Relations Association, aims to usher forward the national economy as it focuses on competitive and quality assurance indices, she said in remarks at the closing ceremony.

The annual event hosts workshops and specialised courses in the field for private and public sector employees throughout the year, and does much to instil the principles of leadership and excellence in the services sector, Al-Sabeeh, also Minister of State for Economic Affairs, explained.

Due to its importance, it has received the backing of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah for a third year in a row.



Winners pose with their awards.

Project wins awards

Engineers Munira Al-Hajri, Dana Al-Huwaidi and Ha-deer Al-Husseini from Petroleum Engineering Department of the College of Engineering and Petroleum at Kuwait University carried out the "Enhanced Oil Recovery using Nano Surfactant" project under the supervision of Dr. Osama Al-Omair.

The project was part of the college's projects in the 33rd Engineering Design Exhibition.

The project involved the use of chemical substances such as surfactant, which were improved through the addition of nano substances like silicon, iron and aluminum to increase oil production.

The project won the best project award sponsored by Kuwait Foundation for Advancement of Sciences (KFAS).

Bid to fight terrorism

Al-Jarallah meets Arab, Foreign ambassadors

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5, (KUNA): Kuwaiti Deputy Foreign Minister Khaled Al-Jarallah met on Sunday with a number of Arab and foreign ambassadors to Kuwait.

A statement by the foreign ministry said Al-Jarallah briefed the diplomats on the ministerial meetings for the international coalition against the so-called Islamic State (IS), scheduled to take place on February 13th, the first of its kind to take place after the liberation of Iraqi territories from IS.

Al-Jarallah noted the meeting will include representatives from 70 countries, four organizations and international institutes.

The ministerial meeting comes as part of the joint international efforts and coordination among member countries combating terrorism, and to follow up on the strategy setup by the coalition to combat IS, Al-Jarallah explained.

The deputy foreign minister added the ministerial meeting is taking place days before Kuwait International Conference of Iraq Reconstruction, scheduled to take place on Feb 12 until Feb 14th, under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah.

Al-Jarallah said the first day of the conference will be for non-government organizations (NGO), with participation of around 100 organizations, noting that the second day will be for the private sector, which will be for the first time, and so far around 1,800 companies and businessmen have registered.

The third day will be the official inauguration day, co-chaired by the State of Kuwait, Iraq, UN, European Union, and the World Bank, Al-Jarallah added.

News in Brief

Medical dev discussed: Consultant of Andrology and Urinary Tract Diseases at Sabah Al-Ahmad Urology Center Dr Dulaim Al-Hajeri affirmed that the 1st Kuwait Men Health Practical Course, which was being held on Feb 3-4 at the center, involved discussions of the latest medical developments in the field of diseases affecting men's health such as impotence and infertility, reports Al-Rai daily.

He highlighted the importance of scientific forums to improve medical skills and upgrade health-care systems.

On the sidelines of the inauguration of the course on Saturday, Feb 3, Dr Al-Hajeri, who is heading the conference, said the course, which is being held in Kuwait for the time in Kuwait history, aimed at explaining and presenting medical developments in the field of diseases affecting men's health such as impotence and infertility.

He affirmed the need to spread awareness and correct some wrong concepts adopted by some men, as well as discuss the causes and symptoms of diseases that affect men's health.

Dr Hajeri revealed that the participants in the conference were consultants with high experience in the field and included consultants from Europe as well as local consultants, adding that the conference also dealt with methods of treating diseases affecting men's health.

Awqaf to increase Kuwaiti hufaz: Head of the Permanent Committee for Kuwait Grand Quran Memorization and Recitation Competition Sheikh Hamad Sinan affirmed that the strategy of Ministry of Awqaf and Islamic Affairs aims at increasing efficiency and the number of Kuwaiti "hufaz" (Quran memorizers), reports Al-Shahed daily.

He explained that the objective of the competition, the technical preparations and its expansions over the years have been aimed at achieving the ministry's strategy to increase the number of Quran memorizers among Kuwaitis.

The competition this year marks its 21st anniversary of establishment. It has witnessed a huge turnout of female participants, outnumbering the male participants by more than 300. About 1,729 contestants have reached the finals this year.

MEW needs 546 new personnel: Ministry of Public Works requires the services of 546 new Kuwaiti personnel in their various specialties for fiscal year 2018/2019, reports Al-Qabas daily.

As per figures, there are 163 vacancies in the Government Tests and Quality Control Center, 104 at Legal, Administration and Financial Affairs Sector, and 86 at Supervision and Audit Sector.

It also needs 128 engineers (Bachelor, Master and PhD holders in their various engineering specialties).

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HH the Amir with Chairman of Arab and Int'l Relation Council Mohammad Jassim Al-Sager and council members.

HH the Amir receives chairman of Arab, Int’l Relations Council

His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace Chairman of the Arab and International Relations Council Mohammad Jassim Al-Sager and council members, on the sidelines of the seventh meeting of the council board of trustees. The meeting was attended by Deputy Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. (KUNA)



HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace National Assembly Speaker Marzuq Ali Al-Ghanim and MPs who took part in the recent meeting of the Inter-Parliamentary Union’s Executive Commission in Geneva. (KUNA)



HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah received on Monday at Bayan Palace Chairman of Ooredoo telecom company Sheikh Saud Bin Nasser Al-Thani and the company’s CEO Sheikh Mohammed Bin Abdullah Al-Thani and board members. The meeting was attended by Minister of Amiri Diwan Affairs Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah. (KUNA)

Education minister’s intervention eyed ‘Student guides not paid since Nov’

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: The student companions or guides have not received their salaries since November 2017 although the Education Ministry appointed them four months ago, reports Al-Anba daily quoting sources. Sources revealed 1,500 female guides were appointed for students in girls schools with a salary of KD 621; pointing out some of them are more than 50 years old and they need to fulfill their financial obligations. Sources called on Minister of Education and Higher Education Dr Hamed Al-Azmi to intervene in addressing the problem, especially since these employees are also facing difficulties due to their vague job description and school affiliation.

Cabinet okays plan designed to combat human trafficking

MoU between Kuwait, Turkey to boost co-op in ‘arms’ given nod

Kuwait Today

Prayer Timings

Fajr	05:14
Sunrise	06:35
Zohr	12:02
Asr	15:08
Maghrib	17:30
Isha	18:49

Weather

Expected weather for the next 24 hours:
By Night: Partly cloudy with light variable wind, with speed of 06-20 km/h.
By Day: Fair with light variable wind to light to moderate north westerly wind, with speed of 06-26 km/h and some scattered clouds will appear.

Station	Max	Min
Kuwait City	23	13
Kuwait Airport	23	05
Abdaly	23	07
Bubyan	21	-
Jahra	24	09
Fallaka Island	22	09
Salmiyah	21	14
Ahmadi	21	14
Nuwaisib	25	09
Wafra	25	06
Salmi	23	06

4 days forecast - Weather

Tuesday, Feb 6

Expected weather.....Partly cloudy

Max Temp	24C
Min Temp	07C
Wind Direction	VRB-SE
Wind Speed	06-28 km/h

Wednesday, Feb 7

Expected weather.....Warm and some scattered clouds will appear

Max Temp	26C
Min Temp	08C
Wind Direction	VRB
Wind Speed	06-18 km/h

Thursday, Feb 8

Expected weather.....Warm and some high clouds will appear

Max Temp	25C
Min Temp	09C
Wind Direction	NW
Wind Speed	12-32 km/h

Thursday, Feb 9

Expected weather.....Warm

Max Temp	24C
Min Temp	07C
Wind Direction	NW
Wind Speed	10-30 km/h

4 days forecast - Marine

Tuesday, Feb 6

Expected weather.....Partly cloudy

Sea state	Slight to moderate
Wave height	1-3 ft
Max Temp	24C
Min Temp	07C
Wind Direction	VRB-SE
Wind Speed	06-26 km/h

Wednesday, Feb 7

Expected weather.....Warm and some scattered clouds will appear

Sea state	Slight
Wave height	1-2 ft
Max Temp	26C
Min Temp	08C
Wind Direction	VRB
Wind Speed	06-18 km/h

Thursday, Feb 8

Expected weather.....Warm and some high clouds will appear

Sea state	Slight to moderate
Wave height	1-4 ft
Max Temp	25C
Min Temp	09C
Wind Direction	NW
Wind Speed	12-32 km/h

Friday, Feb 9

Expected weather.....Warm

Sea state	Slight to moderate
Wave height	2-1 ft
Max Temp	24C
Min Temp	07C
Wind Direction	NW
Wind Speed	10-30 km/h

Tide times at Shuwaikh Port

1st high tide:	15:43
2nd high tide:	03:24
1st low tide:	09:28
2nd low tide:	21:48
Sunrise:	06:36
Sunset:	17:29

Recorded yesterday at Kuwait Airport

Max temp	23C
Min temp	04C
Max Rh	54%
Min Rh	15%
Max Wind	NW 39 km/h
Total Rainfall in 24 hrs	0 mm

Recorded yesterday at South Dolphin

Min/Max/ Air Temp	12/22C
Min/Max Rel Hum	28/67%
Wind Direction/Wind Speed	NW/22 km/h
Prev Wave Dir/Max Wave Ht	N/-ft
Min/Max Sea Surface Temp	-/- C
Sea Current	Upwelling

Directorate General of Civil Aviation

Meteorological Dept.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5, (KUNA): The Kuwaiti Cabinet has given the thumps up to a national strategy designed to prevent human trafficking- and immigrant smuggling.

In its weekly meeting presided over by His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, the executive body assigned the foreign and justice ministries with the task of making sure that the plan comes to fruition.

Payments

Meanwhile, after explanations from Deputy Prime Minister and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah Al-Sabah and Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf, the Cabinet agreed to compensate affected military personnel, under the provision that the payments will only be given to those entitled to them. A decision to amend a law dealing with real estate registration was also among measures taken by the Cabinet, in addition to a law that seeks to prevent conflict of interest, both of which have been referred to His Highness the Amir.

Other decisions taken by the Cabinet include a protocol to amend a Kuwaiti and Turkish agreement over double taxation on capital gains, as well as a similar deal with the Bangladeshi government to prevent income tax.

Boost

A Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Kuwait and Turkey to boost cooperation in the arms industry was given the green light by the Cabinet, in addition to an aviation deal with Kyrgyzstan, all of which await His Highness the Amir’s approval.

As part of discussions of global happenings, the Cabinet expressed its deepest sympathies over a deadly US train crash in the state of South Carolina, which left scores of people either dead or injured.



HH the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Al-Mubarak Al-Sabah chairs the weekly Cabinet meeting.

Bid to redefine, reorganize investment rules in Islamic banks

CBK to hold monitoring workshops

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: The Central Bank of Kuwait will this year hold a number of monitoring workshops, the objectives of which will include redefining and reorganizing the investment rules in Islamic banks, reports Al-Qabas daily quoting informed sources.

They said the current rules are based on Article No. 86 of Law No. 32/1986 concerning cash and the Central Bank of Kuwait as well as organizing the banking rules, adding that the recent experiences particularly the crisis of 2008 necessitates the amendment of these rules.

The sources revealed about

the bank’s intention to implement new measures and criteria that will lead to balanced investment covering various sectors instead of focusing on one sector and neglect the rest.

They elaborated on the crisis of 2008 and its consequences as well as weak monitoring prevalent before and after the crisis.

The crisis led a number of Islamic financial institutions to turn into speculation investment companies. Some Islamic financial institutions suffered losses amounting to billions.

Those institutions returned to the right banking path after the crisis ended and took rele-

vant steps in terms of preparing and implementing strict strategies.

The sources stressed the importance of studying the aspects that led to the deviations and ensuring compliance with the regulations.

They highlighted a number of criteria that should be focused on including the balance between enhancing profits and developing the role of the banks without speculation of the prices of the assets, reducing the risk from average to the lowest level, and proper management of the assets in a manner that will save cash to deal with any emergency situations.

firm belief in, democracy that serves the interest of the nation and citizens.

Outcomes

Then, Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah briefed his colleagues on the outcomes of a recent visit by Yemeni Foreign Minister Abdulmalik Al-Mekhlafi to Kuwait.

During the visit, both Yemeni and Kuwaiti sides discussed bilateral relations in all

fields, the latest Yemeni situation and ongoing international efforts to find a political solution to the Yemeni crisis and to alleviate the sufferings of Yemeni people.

Sheikh Sabah Al-Khaled also apprised the Cabinet of the outcomes of his participation in the recent ministerial meeting of the Arab Peace Initiative Committee and the emergency meeting of Arab foreign ministers recently held in Cairo, focusing on the latest situation of Jerusalem.

GMRP kicks off free training courses for those interested in blue collar jobs

Technical, vocational works courses offered

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: As part of efforts to prepare Kuwaitis to be self-reliant and proficient in some blue collar jobs, the Government and Manpower Restructuring Project (GMRP) has begun free technical training courses for

those interested in blue collar workers, reports Al-Rai daily.

In this context, GMRP held a meeting with a committee of officials from the Ministry of Social Affairs and Labor, and Public Authority for Applied Education and Training to actualize the objective.



A group photo of the KU conference

KU hosts academic accreditation confab

Academic Accreditation Unit at the Faculty of Medicine in the Health Sciences Center- Kuwait University declared open Faculty of Medicine's Academic Accreditation Conference (FMAA) Sunday morning inside Abdulrazzak Auditorium, Jabriya Campus.

Vice President of the Center for Health Sciences Professor Adel Al-Awadhi welcomed guests from the United States, Britain and Turkey to the auspicious event.

Among notable dignitaries present were President of the World Forum of Medical Education (WFME) Professor David Gordon, Director of Global Engagement Office at West Virginia University Professor Christopher Martin, LCME Co-Secretary and Senior Director of Accreditation Services at the Association of American Medical Colleges Professor Dan Hunt, and President of the Association of Medical Education Eval-

uation and Accreditation Program in Turkey Professor Iskander Sayk. Also present from Kuwait was the Director of Kuwait National Academic Accreditation and Quality Education Assurance Board Professor Nouriya Al-Awadhi, alongside Dean of the Faculty of Medicine- Kuwait University Professor Adel Ayed, deans of other HSC faculties, and several academic staff from the aforementioned faculties.

The meeting set the mechanism of opening training courses for those interested in technical and vocational works, especially home maintenance, and halls of the Community Development Department in the Ministry of Social Affairs will be used for this purpose.

Succeeded

The meeting succeeded in putting down the action plan and mechanism of implementation based on each specialty, indicating citizens of different ages and genders will participate in the home maintenance training courses.

Another meeting has been scheduled to shed light on the level of readiness before the resumption of students in April, and the role expected of the Public Authority for Applied Education and Training is to select lecturers and provide their needs for the commencement of theory and practical lessons, while specifying the required experience.

Also, Ministry of Social Affairs is expected to determine venues of the training courses in any community development center across all six governorates.



The Industry and Labor Committee of Kuwait Chamber of Commerce and Industry (KCCI) held its first meeting of 2018 on Tuesday, Jan 9. The meeting was presided over by Fahad Yaqoub Al-Jouan and was attended by officials from Public Authority for Manpower as well as Secretary General of Manpower and Government Restructuring Program (GMRP) Fawzi Mohammed Al-Majdali. The meeting was focused on obtaining opinions about the proportion of citizens in non-governmental agencies and private sector. It was a consultative meeting on how Kuwaiti human resources can be developed and recruitment of expatriates can be minimized in order to achieve a balance in accordance with the proper economic standards.



The South African delegation with UIC officials

UIC receives S. Africa delegation

The Union of Investment Companies (UIC) Sunday received a business delegation from Eastern Cape Town of South Africa. The delegation was headed by South African Ambassador to Kuwait HE Mzolisela Bona.

Deputy Chairman of UIC Saleh Saleh Al-Salami headed the Kuwaiti side in a meeting during which both sides discussed issues of mutual interest such as the investment opportunities in Eastern Cape Town.

The meeting was held in the presence of board member Nawaf Hussain Marafie, Deputy Executive Director

Saad Al-Zayed, UIC Secretary General Prof Ramadan Ali Al-Sharrah and Director of Technical Support Fadwa Durwaidh from the Kuwaiti side.

The South African delegation comprised of the CEO of Eastern Cape Development Cooperation (ECDC) Ndzondelelo Buhle Dzulane, Head of Innovation, Trade & Investment at ECDC Thabo Vaughan Shenhane, Business Advisor of the Export Unit at ECDC Naledi Colleem Siwisa, Counselor at South African Embassy in Kuwait Pule Bosilong, and Trade & Information Officer at the embassy Aimam Akhras.

Kuwait's ex-FM attends meeting

Arab and Int'l Relations Council discusses Trump Jerusalem plan

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5, (KUNA): Arab and International Relations Council President Mohammad Al-Saqer said US President Donald Trump's recognition of Jerusalem as Israel's capital and transfer of US embassy from Tel Aviv to the occupied city, topped council's meeting agenda on Sunday.

The meeting also touched upon humanitarian conditions in Syria, Yemen and Libya, as well as crises in regional countries, Al-Saqer told reporters following the meeting.

Kuwait's former foreign minister Sheikh Dr Mohammad Sabah Al-Salem Al-Sabah said the meeting was held amidst critical development at the Arab and international scenes.

He said the meeting's prime issue was the Palestinian cause.

The council members, he added, condemned Trump's decision and rushed to help address financial resources of the UN Palestinian workers' agency (UNRWA) in the wake of the US cessation of funding.

"Kuwait was the only Arab country that, along with a number of Western

countries, acted to address the (financial) deficit," he said.

Sheikh Mohammad said he believed there was a need to evaluate the Arab order to address strategic problems facing national security. "This can happen through good governance and openness among regimes and their people," he added.

Sheikh Mohammad, meanwhile, said the agenda of the State of Kuwait reflected same issues at the Gulf and Arab levels.

Hanan Ashrawi, spokesperson of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO), said "we need to unite the visions and adopt strategic positions that help resolve our causes." The US "is undoubtedly offering Al-Quds as an easy bite for the Israeli occupation, and to make Al-Quds a Jewish city, not an Arab Islamic and Christian city which has a tradition, a history, rights and people live in," she said.

"What is happening now is an actual change on the ground, a unilateral imposition with false facts," said Ashrawi.

Tillerson due

Continued from Page 1

part of interaction and engagement with the Iraqi government. "We all want to see the elimination of corruption, we work very closely with institutions dispensing and dispersing funds so that they maintain very transparent processes that we can monitor and hopefully prevent corruption." He believes that the Iraqi government understands the need to strive to eliminate corruption and make sure that these investments need to be handled in the right way with the benefits going to the people.

Commenting on concerns of delay and non-delivery of pledges, he shared that the US and Kuwait had a good record on delivering their pledges, and other countries were encouraged to do the same as the funds would help create the stability needed for those displaced to return to their homes.

Discussing the Ministerial Meeting of the Global Coalition to defeat ISIS, Ambassador Silverman shared that the conversation had changed from fighting DAESH on the battlefield with the conference focussing on preventing back and forth travel and money flows of fighters.

The many aspects of fighting DAESH includes bringing an end to financing, the emergence of new safe havens, recruitments, energy production and sale, as well as undermining propaganda and enlisting the help of law enforcement to track foreign fighters. He shared that there has been unprecedented information sharing

between coalition members and a comprehensive effort as the fight is bigger than the one on the battlefield.

He stated that the coalition has to remain united and dedicated to enduring victory in Syria where the situation is more complicated on account of the political regime. "I believe we are at an inflection point, a key point to stabilise the gains, ensure that DAESH and al-Qaeda are defeated, and restore normal life." He also shared the hope for a political transition of unified Syria under post-Assad leadership.

The ministerial meeting is a piece of a much larger effort and will provide the over-arching strategy to be followed by more focussed meetings such as the Ministerial on Defence on Feb 14 in Rome, a working group on foreign terrorist fighters to be held on Feb 21 in the Hague, and so on.

The Ambassador stressed that a solution to the GCC dispute was very important, "We need a united GCC to meet the challenges and threats that the region faces. That includes the malignant activities of Iran in the region." He praised the efforts of HH the Amir and the Kuwaiti government to try and solve this conflict.

He shared that the US has a relationship with each member country as well as the GCC as a whole, "We continue our own efforts to try and encourage a settlement of this dispute without delay."

Speaking on the Israel-Palestinian situation, he commented that recent steps taken by the US government, i.e. announcing a decision to move its Embassy from Tel Aviv to Jerusalem, do not pre-judge the final decisions and stressed that the two parties would ultimately be the ones to determine the settlement.

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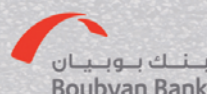


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KUNA photo
Chairman of the State Audit Bureau Adel Al-Sarawi with the delegation from Estonian National Audit Office.

Domestic workers file in Parliament agenda

Joint plan to tackle pollutants

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5, (Agencies): The Parliament will discuss on Tuesday the letter of MP Omar Al-Tabtabaei requesting for approval of a proposal to ask the government to form a committee consisting of representatives from the ministries of Interior and Foreign Affairs and Al-Durra Company for Recruitment of Domestic Workers, reports Al-Rai daily.

The letter points out that the committee should also consist of any party concerned with the activities of Al-Durra Company and the problems it is facing. The committee should find suitable solutions, hold accountable officials who caused problems the company is facing, and present its report to the Parliament within two months.

In his statement to the daily, Al-Tabtabaei said he will reveal certain information to the Parliament on Tuesday. He explained this information will expose some employees in the foreign affairs who conspired in dealing with the domestic workers file considering the company was established almost two years ago and it has not been able to perform its



Al-Tabtabaei

duties". He added the company for recruiting domestic workers was established to counter misuse of licenses to recruit foreign domestic workers and to curb visa trading and international condemnation of Kuwait as it has been accused of violating human and labor rights of expatriates.

In addition, the establishment of the company was aimed at reducing the cost that Kuwaiti families bear in hiring domestic workers, especially the families which are in need of such services.

"Despite sincere efforts exerted by the management of the company, it has not been able to perform the role which it was established for, let alone encountering obstacles and slackness of official bodies including some of our diplomatic missions outside," he concluded.

Meanwhile, acting Chairman of the State Audit Bureau Adel Al-Sarawi on Monday affirmed importance of cooperation with the Estonian National Audit Office for measuring power consumption and impact of oil plants' emissions on the Kuwaiti environment.

During a meeting with a delegation from Estonian National Audit Office, Al-Sarawi said environmental conservation, climate and access to modern energy are important for sustainable development.

The Kuwaiti-Estonian cooperation at this level is mostly practical and subject to observation from both Kuwait Oil Company (KOC) and Kuwait National Petroleum Company (KNPC).

SAB appreciates working with Estonian National Audit for boosting its expertise in environmental and financial control, Al-Sarawi said in a statement to KUNA, on sidelines of the meeting with the visiting Estonian delegation,

"ACCORDING to a narrator, who will be responsible for what has been attributed to him, 'administrative development' is no longer a government priority," columnist and former minister of planning Dr Mohammad Al-Duwaihees wrote for Al-Shahed daily.

"He elucidated, the private sector companies, which are owned by the influential people, have become administrators of development in some government agencies.

"The Kuwaiti youth are replaced by foreign workers and some of those close to the influential people and meet the satisfaction of the senior officials continue to be in the government institutions.

"The administrative leadership responsible for the tasks of organization and administrative development is powerless under the prescriptive appointments and leadership of these bodies, or, as the general saying goes, 'who marries my mother becomes my uncle'.

"As a matter of fact, the efforts that had been exerted to build the administrative



Al-Duwaihees

evolution which some of the Kuwaiti men had spent their ages for the sake of organizing and developing the country and upgrade the government institutions and apparatuses over 50 years, through the unbridled desire of some leading officials who are involved in 'parachuting recruitments' to meet the satisfaction of some influential people to nullify the role of these institutions and apparatuses as well as the latter's importance and priorities towards achieving of the country's development administrative evolution.

"However, it is ironic that one of the most influential persons currently impedes the administrative development complaining about the length of the documentary circle.

"The companies that were established and entrusted with the task of organizing and developing, which cost the state millions of dinars, sank for more than two years ago in their first attempt to develop 'a new system for the government sector pay scale'.

"The confusion in the administrative decisions in the government apparatus is the result of the lack of transparency and placing special interests at the top of the public interest and putting the wrong man in the wrong place.

"We are actually looking at the public interest and as such it should not be ignored or silenced when we see the childish manipulation based on achieving some private interests which are being generalized throughout the State executive apparatus in favor of the private interest at the expense of the public interest.

"We want to emphasize that planning and administrative development must be among the government priorities and its strategic plans. The Civil Service Commission (CSC) must ensure that decisions are taken in the best interests of the country and carried out on a sound scientific basis and are consistent with the orientations of the 'Kuwait Vision 2035'.

"However, the talk in this field will take a long time, but I preferred to refer to the topic swiftly, as they say 'Freedom is enough to make reference'."

Also:

"I swear by God I am impressed by our wise government, which rarely reacts seriously and immediately, to a useful opinion, idea or observation at the national level, as it does when it reacts immediately and strongly to a marginal and superficial issues," columnist and former Deputy Director-General of the Kuwait News Agency (KUNA) Iqbal Al-Ahmad wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"Recently our wise government reacted with force, speed and firmness with a special complaint filed by a citizen who objected to a word in an advertisement distributed on the streets of Kuwait because he interpreted the word as indecent although this may have not been the intention of the advertisers or what is written on a placard, or a book or even a poster.

"However, I laughed when one of the companies was reluctant and on the second day of publishing the advertisement to promote one of its product, changed a few words, because a complaint had been filed, the announcement was considered indecent, after the complainant interpreted the word as a blasphemy in its meaning and not in its true meaning according to the Arab dictionary.

"Anyway, our main theme is not the purport of the advertisement, the poster or the book. What I want to point out is that the government's immediate, swift and firm response to such a complaint does not match any governmental interaction with the same force and speed with national issues that are in the interest of the nation and the public as well although the educated people, writers, the intellectuals and the specialists refer to the same.

"However, regardless of this complaint or any other, what I want to highlight is that our good government is attentive and responsive to such complaints, while it is deaf to more serious, important and crucial issues of national concern."

"Strange and funny enough, our Kuwaiti Minister of Finance Dr Nayef Al-Hajraf announced the state budget for 2018/2019 with deficit of KD 6.5 billion equivalent to over \$20 billion," Abdul-Mohsin Juma wrote for Al-Jarida daily.

"Legal and Legislative Affairs Committee of the National Assembly, located hundred meters away, rejected the proposed tax on expatriate remittances valued at around KD 3 billion (over \$10 billion). The committee rejected the proposal under the pretext that it's unconstitutional!

"Each person knows that advanced countries such as Sweden and Australia, which are deep-rooted in democracy and equality than Kuwait, do not allow foreigners to transfer a penny without paying tax. A person convicted of tax evasion can not transfer money from Germany, France, Spain, Belgium and the United States. Personally, my mortgage tax was higher than that of my European neighbor's while I was staying in Europe."

"Talks about Shaddadiya University project date back to 1970s. It was a dream for every citizen to have his or her child educated in that educational edifice. By now we could have been blessed to witness students, lecturers, researchers in this integrated university city. However, corrupt minds had other ideas," Dr Hayla Hamad Mukaimi wrote for Al-Nahar daily.

"These corrupt minds refused the transformation of this dream into reality, due to which it turned out to become a nightmare. How long do we have to wait?"

"Former minister of Education Mohammad Al-Fares, when he was appointed in the education portfolio, had said, "By the end of the year, we would open the university". However, nothing materialized at the end of that year except the opening of a book tent for all students from all colleges to buy books, as the Shuwaikh campus was too small to host more than 40,000 students who wanted to buy books."

"It is not completely illogical and irrational to have someone instigating Egyptians to boycott their presidential elections. I find such people strange, and truth be told, they are not wrong due to their foolish behavior. Instead, the least description that can get is they have transgressed the right of their nation in a bid to tarnish the image of Egypt," columnist Amina Al-Ali wrote for Al-Anba daily.

"Egypt has made rapid and significant strides in terms of development. The development achieved within a period of four years by President Abdul-Fattah el-Sisi could not be achieved for the past several decades. This is due to the sagacity and good planning of this great president. Egypt continues to see the light day after day despite the efforts of some to put it back to darkness which existed in the past.

"All I can say is those who turn their back on Egypt and incite others to do the same suffer from political bankruptcy. They are oblivious to the fact that Egypt needs a sincere and neutral political leader who brings all social divides under one roof for the sake of nation building and development.

"Nonetheless, this great country can overcome any obstacle it encounters. Given that el-Sisi is the effective factor as far as Egypt is concerned, the path of development will continue in every aspect of Egyptian life."

"There is no need discussing the deep history shared by citizens of the Arabian Gulf countries, because it's natural for everybody to know it. The same thing goes for morals and traditions upon which we're raised since the establishment of Gulf Cooperation Council, Khalid Ahmad Al-Tarrah wrote for Al-Qabas daily.

"There's no doubt that any misdeed by individuals, even if they are public officials, do not represent our countries or the Arabian Gulf society as a whole; it rather represents their own nature and myopic initiative and expression.

"The Kuwaiti minister's visit to Qatar was an official mission to express appreciation for the vital role Doha is playing in sport for the benefit of Kuwait and its citizens, as well as other GCC countries and their citizens.

"The misunderstanding among some GCC countries does not and will never affect the neutral stance of Kuwait in her quest to achieve the much sought reconciliation within the Arabian Gulf family. We hope that all parties concerned will sheath the sword and allow peace to reign among the GCC countries and citizens. This is the best way of sustaining our indivisible entity to face external challenges that threaten sovereignty of the Arabian Gulf nations."

— Compiled by Zaki Taleb

Cadet officers re-examine eyed

Transparency vowed in probe

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: The Defense Ministry announced that the headquarters of the Army General Staff has begun forming commissions of enquiry on the deaths of two cadet officers affiliated to Ali Al-Sabah Military College and Ahmad Al-Jaber Air Force College, upon instructions from the First Deputy Premier and Minister of Defense Sheikh Nasser Sabah Al-Ahmad, reports Al-Qabas daily.

The General Staff explained a neutral committee was set up by the Ministry of Health to re-examine all cadet officers enrolled in the two colleges, while evaluating the level of services provided — especially food and medical, in addition to the quality of exercise and its impact on them.

Statement affirmed the case will be handled with full transparency in the shortest

time possible to facilitate investigation of the commission of representatives from the Ministries of Defense and Health.

Meanwhile, the new Board of Directors of Police Cooperative Society carried out a preemptive "cleaning" operation in its branches throughout Kuwait after careful monitoring and follow-up. Through this operation, the board unraveled the truth about those suspected of involvement in the embezzlement that has been occurring in the branches of the society, reports Al-Rai daily.

The board discovered many embezzlement operations in its branches, followed them up carefully, identified those involved in the crime and referred them to the concerned authorities in a bid to recover the embezzled money.

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News in Brief

MP Al-Fadhel hospitalized: MP Ahmad Al-Fadhel was admitted to hospital two days ago following a bout of high temperature, but he reportedly left the hospital to attend the Parliament session and then returned to the hospital again to continue with the treatment, reports Al-Shahed daily.

Meanwhile, in what is seen as unique, the Kuwaiti Cultural Office in Cairo has recommended that the Kuwaiti researcher Awad Freijan Farraj should be posthumously honored with a doctorate degree, reports Al-Rai daily.

The researcher died a few days ago in a traffic accident.

Two young women held: The Hawally police have arrested two young women — a Kuwaiti and an Egyptian — and referred them to authorities, reports Al-Rai daily.

The women were seized on suspicion and police records showed the Kuwaiti had been sentenced in absentia for failing to pay KD 70,000 debt and the Egyptian was reported missing by her family.

The Kuwaiti has been handed over to the Sentences Enforcement Department and the Egyptian to the Sulabiya Police Station.

GCC man damages shops: Police have arrested a young GCC citizen and referred him to the Northern Jahra Police Station for damaging two shops and attempting to attack workers for no apparent reason, reports Al-Anba daily.

According to a report received by the Operations Room of the Interior Ministry the suspect damaged two shops — a restaurant and an internet café — and then attempted to attack the workers.

The young man is believed to be mentally unstable and he has been referred to the Psychological Medicine Hospital.

Ammo cache destroyed: The Explosives Handling Department of the Ministry of Interior recently destroyed a large quantity of ammunition at the new airport off Jleeb Al-Shuyoukh during digging works, reports Al-Anba daily.

The daily added, the ammunition lay buried in sand since the atrocious occupation of the country by Iraq.



Mol photo
Long lines of illegal expats wishing to leave voluntarily throng the Immigration Department.
5,000 out of 80,000 illegals leave

Acting Director-General of the General Department for Residence Affairs, Major-General Abdullah Al-Hajri said about 5,000 violators have so far taken advantage of the Amnesty and have either left the country or legalized their stay in the country from Jan 29 until Feb 4, 2018. The amnesty period runs until Feb 22, reports Al-Qabas daily. Al-Hajri pointed out

Indians topped the list and about 2,000 of the 32,000 have already left the country. In the second place came the Egyptians and about 1,000 violators of the 10,724 have left the country. Five hundred Filipinos of 11,809 have left while only 400 Bangladeshis out of 25,000 have taken advantage of the amnesty period.

Other Voices

Can't do sans expertise

By Ahmad Al-Sarraf

Historically, the Japanese are seen to be the most self-confident people around the world. They are certainly the best in almost everything. Were it not for their painful defeat in the World War Two following the dropping of two atom bombs on two cities and being subjected to humiliating conditions imposed on them by the American General Douglas MacArthur, they would have still been arrogant and conceited because they had never lost a war before.

Japan, at the peak of its strength and economic power it represents, the third in the world after America and China, with all its self-pride and the depth of the Japanese conscience, did not hesitate to use the talents and capabilities of foreign experts, such as Ghosn, the French industrialist of Lebanese origin, who took over the task where others had failed.

Ghosn rescued one of the biggest Japanese automakers from bankruptcy and made it a leading company. Who are we (in Kuwait) to differ from the whole world, and think we are better than others? The Japanese are an example, so we require those who can manage one of our biggest technical institutions which has lost billions of dollars. Should he be a Kuwaiti?

It is nice to be proud of our homeland and our citizens, to provide jobs for them, and to give them priority, but that does not mean they are better than others in everything.

The citizen is not the best, for example in the areas of cleaning. They are knowledgeable and experienced in the management of banks and the

oil industry and others so we must not hesitate to use others to carry out these jobs and tens of thousands of others from outside Kuwait, for reasons far from passion, but often deceptive.

We write this after the Kuwait Airways Corporation, after setting a precedent, I would have liked to feel it had been beautiful, published an advertisement for the post of the Chief Executive Officer, the highest operational position in the company. However the ad stated that one of the conditions that must be met by the applicant is to be a 'Kuwaiti'. I do not know the reason for this arrogance.

Our national carrier has suffered from the government, which for three decades has neglected it. This negligence has caused losses in billions of dollars, and financial, labor and technical problems. Its current Board of Directors comprising respectable members knows that it may be worthy to open the door for the Kuwaitis and others to apply for the top positions of the company, even if for a specific period.

The global market needs global expertise, qualified to manage and rescue troubled airlines and return them to profitability. If we do this, we do not neglect the rights of citizens, we are not better than other countries and companies in the region, and the UAE is a model as it has employed the foreign expertise in many of its companies without being disgraced. What applies to Kuwait Airways applies to all other institutions.

The situation of the company is dangerous and requires great efforts. I do not think the latest patchy solutions will lift the company from dire straits. We hope we are wrong. Everyone wants our national carrier to return to its glorious days of prosperity.

□ □ □
e-mail: habibi.enta1@gmail.com

By Jaber Al-Hamoud/Meshal Al-Sanousi
Al-Seyassah Staff and Agencies

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: In the latest development concerning the storming of the National Assembly premises case, and a day after Consultant Ahmad Al-Ajeel withdrew from hearing of the case due to legal constraint, the Court of Cassation Monday dismissed bail application of the accused persons during a session chaired by Consultant Saleh Al-Muraished, and fixed Feb 18 to hear the appeal.

The panel of judges at the Court of Cassation held a consultative meeting inside the chamber to review the appeal with officials of the Public Prosecution Department and Supreme Prosecution, and they agreed to look into the case objectively.

The Supreme Prosecution presented a two-page supplementary memo containing request for amending its requests against petition of the Public Prosecution Department for stricter penalties.

Defense team of the suspects were also present to solicit bail for their clients with whatever guarantees the court may deem appropriate, and sought permission to copy opinion of the Supreme Prosecution.

Meanwhile, legal sources indicated the appellants will lose the right of appeal in case other suspects fail to present themselves on February 18; thus the existing judgment will become final and effective.

□ □ □
Saving Kuwaiti youths: Assistant Undersecretary for Criminal Security Affairs at Ministry of Interior Major General Khalid Al-Dayeen affirmed the keenness of the ministry to eradicate drugs and protect youths from dangers and negative effects resultant from the use of drugs.

In a press statement issued by Ministry of Interior on Sunday, Major General Al-Dayeen said the Drugs Control General Department (DCGD) is committed to the national project represented by Kuwait's national development plan to achieve social cohesion and ensure



KFSD photo
A fireman tends to a man suffering from suffocation.
12 hurt in gas cylinders blast

By Meshal Al-Sanousi
Al-Seyassah Staff

Fire broke out in a flat on the ground floor of a six-storied building with a basement in Hawalli area due to explosion of gas cylinders, resulting in 12 casualties, most of whom suffered from

smoke inhalation. According to security sources, when the Operations Room of Ministry of Interior received information about the flat on fire, firefighters rushed to the location with securitymen and paramedics.

After evacuating all the people in the vicinity, firefighters extinguished the fire. Paramedics provided treatment to the victims and referred two of them to the nearest hospital for treatment. Investigations revealed that the cause of the fire was explosion of gas cylinders. Securitymen took necessary action.

□ □ □
full adherence to international treaties and conventions on fighting drugs. He revealed that the DCGD, in the past year, managed to seize more than 367 kilograms of drugs including 11.73 kilograms of Chemical drug, 21.07 kilograms of marijuana, 7.928 kilograms of Shabu (methamphetamine), 321.929 kilograms of hashish, 4.949 kilograms of heroin, 400 grams of cocaine and 2.42 million narcotic pills.

Major General Al-Dayeen affirmed that the directives of Deputy Premier and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khaled Al-Jarrah to all security sectors call for adoption of an advanced thought and scientific approach to combat crimes related to all types of drugs.

He highlighted the efforts exerted by the Criminal Security Sector in its battle against drugs, explaining that they are based on several axes that are integrated to achieve the desired results – protect the society

from the dangers of drugs and contraband drug smugglers and dealers who try to spread corruption and crime in the society.

Major General Al-Dayeen stressed the need to work on suppressing those who are trying to introduce these toxins in the country, vowing to immunize the society against abuse and raise awareness in the society about the dangers of drugs.

□ □ □
Woman dies in mishap: An Arab woman died when her vehicle collided with another and toppled on King Fahad Abdulaziz Expressway.

According to security sources, when the Operations Room of Ministry of Interior received information about the accident, securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location and pulled out the victim who was trapped inside the toppled vehicle. Paramedics examined her to re-

alize she had succumbed to serious injuries. Her corpse was referred to the Forensics Department.

Meanwhile, an Asian expatriate sustained injuries when the heavy vehicle he was driving hit a cement barrel and toppled on the road.

Securitymen and paramedics rushed to the location after receiving information about the accident. The driver was referred to the nearest hospital for treatment.

The heavy vehicle was moved from the road and the traffic flow was facilitated.

In addition, a Kuwaiti citizen reported at Firdous Police Station the theft of his vehicle.

He told securitymen that he was shocked to find his vehicle missing when he left his house, indicating that he does not know who could have stolen his vehicle.

Description of the stolen vehicle was circulated to patrol teams for the arrest of the thief and recovery of the vehicle.

News in Brief

Appeals upholds ruling: The Court of Appeals upheld the verdict issued by a lower court which dismissed the lawsuit of Ministry of Defense to obligate a Kuwaiti citizen to pay back KD 8,300 to the ministry, says Al-Seyassah.

The ministry explained that the citizen, who is its former employee, was absent from work without permission for 15 days. During adjustment of benefits, it was discovered that he owes the ministry the abovementioned amount which was paid to him undeservedly.

The counsel to the employee Lawyer Elaf Al-Saleh called for the rejection of the lawsuit, insisting that the case was "water under the bridge, eaten by time", as his client had ended his services seven years ago and had not taken that amount through cheating or fraud.

The Court of First Instance had also dismissed the case on that basis but the ministry appealed the verdict.

□ □ □
Jail for ex-MP: The Court of Appeals, presided over by Judge Nasr Salem Al Hayd, upheld the lower court's decision to impose jail term of one year with hard labor on former MP Abdul-Hamed Dashti, says Al-Seyassah.

The former MP was charged with using words deemed offensive to Judge Muhammad Al-Dueij and the judicial authority through his Twitter post about the infamous Abdally Cell case.

The head of the judicial panel that issued the verdict on the case, Judge Muhammad Al-Dueij, filed the lawsuit against Dashti, accusing the latter of using words with the tone of threats towards the judge and using phrases which offended him.

24,500 absconders: Over the past year, the service centers and the Residence Affairs Department of the Ministry of Interior have prepared at least 24,500 reports on absconders of different nationalities during the past year, reports Al-Anba daily quoting security sources.

The sources explained a majority of these absconding people are domestics who work with different people and the security authorities have difficulty in identifying their address or the addresses of those who shelter the absconders.

□ □ □
Stunt driver hurt: A Kuwaiti youth sustained injuries when his vehicle toppled while he was performing dangerous stunts in Sabahiya area, says Al-Seyassah.

According to security sources, the suspect was performing stunts with his pickup truck when it toppled and burst into flames. He was trapped inside his vehicle but he was rescued on time. He was referred to Adan Hospital for treatment as he had sustained several injuries.

Necessary action was taken against him. Meanwhile, four juveniles were detained for drifting after patrolmen spotted the catchword "Mafia...I Remember You" boldly inscribed on their pick-up.

A security source said the officers were on a regular tour of Fahad Al-Ahmad area when they caught the juveniles drifting on the road and charged for driving without license and endangering life. All four juveniles were referred to Juvenile Prosecution for the aforementioned offense after their vehicle had been impounded.

□ □ □
Drugs with motorist: A Kuwaiti motorist was arrested in a hot chase by Mubarak Al-Kabeer security operatives in possession of narcotic pills, says Al-Seyassah.

Apparently, the suspect was driving on excessive speed when he caught the attention of patrolmen on a round of the location, and they ordered him to pull over for checking.

Social media misused

Woman loses all in infidelity case

By Jaber Al-Hamoud
Al-Seyassah Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: A Family Court Judge dissolved the marriage between a man and his estranged wife, and ordered the woman to refund KD 10,000 (advanced payment of the dowry). She was forfeited of all rights deserved by a woman in a divorce, as she was found guilty in the entire impasse.

According to the case file, the man actually caught the woman sending messages to strange men via social media application WhatsApp, which included her nude pictures.

It was on this basis the plaintiff lawyer Bashar Al-Nassar submitted a complaint at a police station accusing the woman of infidelity and disobedience. Preliminary investigation revealed that the woman truly engaged more than one man in WhatsApp chats and calls, as per data retrieved. A case of extramarital activities was registered against her.

She is said to have perpetrated her acts for long hours late at night. This prompted the lawyer to file a divorce lawsuit on behalf of his client, seeing the issue was beyond reconciliation level.

The attorney argued that the man may have conducted some bad deeds but it was no excuse for the woman to engage in extramarital activities, indicating she could have filed for divorce instead. He presented documented proof showing the man was generous and dutiful to the woman through trips he organized and expensive gifts he showed on her.



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The British Embassy in Kuwait has a vacancy for a Deputy Head of Corporate Services who will be responsible for providing support to the Head of Corporate Services in the day-to-day running of the Embassy's Estates and Maintenance teams, and deputising in his absence.

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KUNA photo
HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah being welcomed by a lady during the ceremony to open the Sheikh Abdullah Al-Salem Cultural Centre.

Interior to terminate services of 150 expatriate employees

PAM mulls plan to regulate recruitment of workers

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: The Ministry of Interior will terminate the contracts of 150 expatriate employees and replace them with Kuwaitis in line with the directive of the Civil Service Commission (CSC) in this regard, reports Al-Rai daily.

Assistant Undersecretary for Citizenship and Passports Affairs Major General Sheikh Mazen Al-Jarrah has asked the Administrative Affairs Department at the ministry to inform the CSC on the need for 1,000 Kuwaiti civilian employees who will be appointed in different sections of the Citizenship and Passports Affairs General Department.

Sources said this is the largest number of national employees that the ministry has ever requested. Sources disclosed these employees

will be distributed as follows: 300 for the six centers issuing electronic passports (50 employees each center — 25 for the morning shift and 25 for the afternoon shift), 300 for the Residency Affairs General Department, 300 for 30 citizens service centers in different governorates and to fill vacancies in the centers which operate in the afternoon, 50 for the Citizenship and Passports Affairs General Department, and 50 for the Residency Affairs General Department and relevant technical departments.

Meanwhile, the Citizenship and Passports Affairs General Department recently received the citizenship applications of martyrs' families according to the decision issued by Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of Interior Sheikh Khalid Al-Jarrah.

The minister had earlier ordered the formation of a committee headed by the assistant undersecretary for Citizenship and Passports Affairs to study files of martyrs' families and determine those who deserve citizen-

ship.

Meanwhile, Public Authority for Manpower (PAM) is laying down a plan that will regulate the procedure of recruiting workers for contracts related to government projects at different stages, while preparing memoranda of understanding with civil society organizations to regulate recruitment activities.

Acting Director of PAM Dr Mubarak Al-Jafour noted the authority has been coordinating with Ministry of Finance and the Supreme Council for Planning and Development concerning the system of managing contracts related to government projects. He explained that the plan targets the recruitment of workers for specific projects at different stages rather than a single batch.

He said the authority has held meetings with 28 different authorities over the issue and reiterated the memorandum of understanding will be later signed with civil society organizations to regulate the activities of recruiting some professions.

Amir inaugurates

Continued from Page 1

Abdullah Al-Sabah, Sheikh Faisal Al-Saud Al-Sabah, His Highness Sheikh Nasser Mohammad Al-Ahmad Al-Sabah, His Highness the Prime Minister Sheikh Jaber Mubarak Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, Sheikh Ali Al-Jarrah, Deputy Premier and Foreign Minister Sheikh Sabah Khaled Al-Hamad Al-Sabah, GCC Secretary General Abdullah Al-Zayani, Deputy Premier and Interior Minister Sheikh Khaled Jarrah Al-Sabah, Deputy Premier and Minister of State for Cabinet Affairs Anas Al-Saleh, senior government, GCC and military officials. (KUNA)

Panel focus

Continued from Page 1

sources of energy and spreading environmental culture among members of society through various media platforms.

The committee also discussed issues related to sewage, waste disposal and factory waste. It then decided to invite Minister of Public Works Hossam Al-Roumi to its next meeting to complete the discussion and debate on other issues, Al-Huwailah added.

Meanwhile, Chairperson of the Central System for Remedying the Status of Illegal Residents (CSRSIR) Saleh Al-Fadlalah told the National Assembly Office during their meeting Monday that inclusion in the 1965 Census is just one of several conditions for naturalization.

Assembly Secretary MP Auda Al-Ruwaie pointed out the information that the office obtained from CSRSIR indicates the file of Kuwait is "brilliant white." He stressed "everyone should investigate those linking us to issues in relation to our Bedoun brethren."

He clarified the committee did not discuss the period or timetable for closing this file with Al-Fadlalah.

Saudis down

Continued from Page 1

triggering what the United Nations has called the world's worst humanitarian disaster.

Yemeni Nobel Prize winner Tawakol Karman was suspended from an Islamist party allied with President Abed Rabbo Mansour Hadi after she accused the Saudi-led coalition that backs him in the country's civil war of acting as occupiers.

Karman won the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize for her role in Arab Spring protests that ousted authoritarian President Ali Abdullah. More recently she has ramped up public criticism of Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates, accusing them of backing a campaign to divide Yemen by supporting southern separatists against the internationally recognised government.

Speaking at the Warwick Economics Summit at Britain's Warwick University over the weekend, Karman said Saudi Arabia and the UAE were driven by a "reckless adventurism" when they intervened in Yemen in 2015 after Iran-aligned Houthi forces drove Hadi into exile.

In an earlier Twitter message, she wrote: "Saudi Arabia and UAE took advantage of the (Houthi) militia coup in Sanaa to launch a very ugly occupation and an uglier influence in Yemen."

The Islah party, regarded as a branch of the Muslim Brotherhood, which is viewed by Saudi Arabia and the UAE as a terrorist organisation, tried to distance itself from Karman and order her suspended from its ranks.

"Tawakkol Karman's statements do not represent the Islah party and its policies, and are not in line with the party's positions," a statement posted on Islah's website said.

"Therefore, the general secretary has decided to freeze her membership according to the party's status."

Karman, who left Yemen after Houthi militia seized the capital Sanaa in a series of military advances that began in late 2014, responded on her Twitter account by describing Islah leaders as "prisoners and slaves" of Riyadh and Abu Dhabi.

Tensions between Islah and southern separatists have been rising since Arab countries, including Saudi Arabia and the UAE, announced a boycott of Qatar in June last year over allegations that Doha backs Islamist militants. Qatar denies the charges.

Islah, eager to ease the worries of Gulf Arab states about its Islamist leanings, has sought to distance itself from the Muslim Brotherhood.

The Brotherhood denies accusations from conservative Arab governments of involvement in terrorism, saying it seeks democracy by peaceful means only.

The southern separatists want to restore the independent state of South Yemen, which merged with North Yemen in 1990. They have fought the Houthis alongside Hadi's forces, but rose up last week and seized control of the southern port of Aden after Hadi refused to sack his prime minister, whom the separatists accuse of mismanagement and corruption.

In the rocky highlands outside of Yemen's rebel-held capital, it quickly becomes clear how the Arab world's poorest country remains mired in a stalemated civil war.

Soldiers and militiamen loyal to Yemen's internationally recognized government describe having a tantalizing view on a clear day of Sanaa's international airport from the moonlit mountains. The price is a steady barrage of incoming fire on the exposed hillside from Shiite rebels, known as Houthis, that makes any further advance treacherous, even with the aid of Saudi-led airstrikes.

The nearly three-year civil war, pitting the Saudi-led coalition against the rebels, has killed more than 10,000 people, displaced 2 million and helped spawn a devastating cholera epidemic

— and yet the front lines have hardly moved.

"In mountainous areas like this it's difficult. The American Army struggled with that in Afghanistan," Yemeni Maj Gen Nasser Ali al-Daibany told Associated Press reporters who were granted access to the front lines on a tour organized by the Saudi-led coalition. "But for us this won't slow us down ... because our boys, our fighters, were trained in these mountains, so they are the sons of this area."

The comparison to Afghanistan, where the US war is now 16 years old, feels apt.

Yemen has also seen decades of conflict, first with the 1960s civil war that ended North Yemen's monarchy. Fighting between Marxist South Yemen and the north followed. Yemen unified in 1990, but resentment persisted under 22 years of kleptocratic rule by Ali Abdullah Saleh.

Yemen's 2011 Arab Spring protests ultimately forced Saleh to resign, but he continued to wield power behind the scenes and maintained the loyalty of many armed forces commanders. In 2014 he formed an alliance with the Houthis — who he had gone to war with in the past — and helped them capture the capital, Sanaa.

Saudi Arabia entered the conflict the following year, at the head of an Arab coalition heavily supported by the United Arab Emirates. They have sought to restore the internationally recognized government, led by Hadi, who is based in Saudi Arabia and whose rule is largely confined to the southern port city of Aden.

Riyadh views the Houthis as an Iranian proxy, and both Saudi Arabia and the United States say Tehran has provided the long-range missiles the rebels have fired into the kingdom. While Tehran supports the Houthis, it denies arming them.

The Saudi-led coalition has waged a devastating air campaign, repeatedly striking markets, medical facilities and civilian targets. The UN has attributed over half of reported child civilian casualties in the conflict to the coalition, and calls Yemen the worst humanitarian crisis in the world.

As the war has dragged on, it has become more muddled, with internal conflicts erupting on both sides. Saleh broke with the Houthis last year and appeared to switch sides, only to be gunned down by the rebels. In recent days, southern separatists backed by the UAE have clashed with forces loyal to Hadi in Aden. Al-Qaeda in the Arabian Peninsula, long seen as one of the most sophisticated offshoots of the global terror network, has exploited the chaos to regroup.

"Yemen has become in many senses a 'chaos state,' a place where the central government has either collapsed or lost control of large segments of the territory," Chatham House expert Peter Salisbury recently wrote. "Yet 'chaos' is a relative term. Although Yemen indeed appears to be chaotic from the outside, it contains its own internal logic, economics and political" powers.

Iran urges

Continued from Page 1

in Turkey's largely Kurdish southeast since 1984.

The Syrian government last week called the Turkish offensive in Afrin an illegal "aggression" and said it would deal with it accordingly.

Two more Turkish soldiers were killed Sunday in Turkey's offensive against Kurdish militia inside Syria, the army said, bringing to 16 the number killed so far in the incursion.

The Turkish army and allied Ankara-backed Syrian rebel forces are seeking to oust the YPG from its western border stronghold of Afrin but the operation so far has been marked by fierce clashes.

Five Turkish soldiers were also wounded in operations inside Syria on Sunday, the army said in a statement. It did not give further details on the circumstances of the deaths and injuries.

The latest casualties come after seven Turkish troops were killed on Saturday, including five in a tank attack, the heaviest single-day loss of the campaign so far.

President Recep Tayyip Erdogan said Sunday said that 935 "terrorists have been neutralised" so far in the operation. It was not immediately possible to verify this figure.

Turkey says the YPG is an offshoot of the outlawed Kurdistan Workers' Party (PKK) which has waged a three-decade insurgency against the Turkish state.

But the YPG has been working closely with the United States to fight the Islamic State extremist group in Syria.

The offensive by Washington's fellow NATO member Ankara on a US-allied force has even raised fears of a military confrontation between two alliance powers.

A convoy of Turkish troops entered Syria's northwestern province of Idlib on Monday to set up a new "observation point" aimed at reducing violence under a deal with Russia, the military said.

Idlib, which is largely controlled by Islamist rebel forces, lies to the west of the Kurdish-held region of Afrin which is currently the target of a major military operation by the Turkish army.

The military said in a statement that the point was the fourth such position within Idlib province set up by the Turkish army in line with peace talks in the Kazakh capital Astana.

It is being set up in the Seyh Isa area of Idlib, it said.

Those talks — sponsored by Turkey, Iran and Russia — set out the creation of four so-called de-escalation zones in Idlib, the greater Damascus area, the southern region of Daraa and the city of Homs.

Idlib is largely controlled by Hayat Tahrir al-Sham (HTS), a group led by al-Qaeda's former Syria affiliate, which ousted more moderate rebels in recent months.

The region is also home to hundreds of thousands of people displaced by Syria's seven-year-old civil war including many who moved after fighting in neighbouring Aleppo province.

Last week, a Turkish convoy seeking to deploy in Idlib was hit by a bomb attack that killed one civilian. The army blamed the Kurdish militants they are fighting in the Afrin area.

The latest deployment also comes after a Russian pilot was killed Saturday in fighting with Islamist rebels after his warplane was downed over Idlib.

HTS claimed that it brought down the plane with a shoulder-launched missile.

Turkey and Russia have been on opposite sides of the civil war, with Ankara backing rebels and Moscow the chief ally of President Bashar al-Assad along with Iran.

Meanwhile, regime air strikes killed 28 civilians in a rebel enclave near Damascus on Monday as Syria's seven-year-old conflict raged on several fronts with non-combatants paying a heavy price.

The region of Eastern Ghouta is home to an estimated 400,000 people living under a crippling government siege that has made food and medicine almost impossible to acquire.

The area has been designated as one of four de-escalation zones in Syria, but residents there have been facing escalating bombardment in recent weeks.

"Dozens of air strikes hit several areas in Eastern Ghouta," said Rami Abdel Rahman, head of the Britain-based Syrian Observatory for Human Rights monitor.

Newswatch

Continued from Page 1

BEIRUT: Militants resisting arrest by the Lebanese army in the restive Tripoli neighbourhood of Bab al-Tabbaneh sparked clashes that killed one on each side, a statement said on Monday.

The violence broke out late on Sunday when the army entered the Sunni stronghold with the aim of arresting wanted militants.

"One soldier was killed and several others wounded" when the unit was targeted by militants, the army said, adding that hand grenades were used against its men. (AFP)

JERUSALEM: A Palestinian stabbed and killed an Israeli man near a major West Bank settlement on Monday before fleeing the scene, Israeli authorities said.

"Israeli man murdered in stabbing attack in Ariel," police spokesman Micky Rosenfeld said in a statement, referring to the settlement in the occupied West Bank.

He said that security forces were searching for the attacker.

The Israeli army identified the attacker as a Palestinian and said the incident occurred at a bus stop at the entrance to Ariel. (AFP)

LONDON: The United States' jailing of a former consultant to Iran's mission to the United Nations is part of a campaign of "psychological warfare", Iran said on Monday.

Ahmad Sheikhzadeh, an Iran-born US citizen, was sentenced to three months on Friday for evading taxes by concealing his income and helping family and friends make money transfers that violated US sanctions against Iran.

Sheikhzadeh, 61, admitted that he had not disclosed his income from the mission, which was paid in cash, on his tax returns, but called the prison sentence "very unfair" and said his prosecution had been an attempt to coerce him to act as an informant from within the Iran mission. (RTRS)

LONDON: A man wielding a machete was shot and arrested in Iran on Monday after trying to break into the presidential office building, Iranian news agencies reported.

Tasnim news agency said he was carrying the weapon and wearing white shroud, symbolising his readiness to sacrifice his life. The incident happened around 11:00 am (0630 GMT).

"The assailant has been arrested and hospitalised. We are trying to identify the person and find out his motive," the deputy governor of Tehran, Mohsen Hamedani, was quoted as saying by Fars news agency. (RTRS)

THE HAGUE: The Netherlands announced Monday it was withdrawing its ambassador from Turkey, and will refuse to allow Ankara to post one in the country as diplomatic ties plunge to new lows.

Relations have deteriorated in the past months, after Dutch officials barred a Turkish minister from attending a rally in Rotterdam on the eve of the March general elections here.

Despite recent high-level talks between the two countries, "we have not been able to agree on the way normalisation should take place," Foreign Minister Halbe Zijlstra said in a statement. (AFP)

CAIRO: Egyptian Army troops have attacked extremist gunmen's hideouts in North Sinai killing one in the action.

The army said in a statement on Monday the regulars, in cooperation with the Air Force, killed "a very dangerous Takfiri gunman" and detained six others in the north of the peninsula.

The army demolished two depots storing motorcycles' spare parts and explosives. (KUNA)

Breaking News

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World News Roundup

Politics

Trillion-dollar deficits returning

Gridlock as immigration, budget ‘deadlines’ loom

WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (Agencies): Bitterly divided US lawmakers return this week to face a shrinking window for reaching deals on immigration, federal spending and the debt, as Republican infighting swirls and President Donald Trump complains he is getting zero cooperation from Democrats.

Trump vowed during his State of the Union address last week to “extend an open hand” to both parties in pursuing an immigration deal that shields 1.8 million undocumented migrants from deportation.

But his proposal has been savaged by opposition Democrats, and Trump’s “open hand” soon wagged an accusatory finger.



Ryan

“They Resist, Blame, Complain and Obstruct — and do nothing” to break the immigration stalemate, Trump tweeted a few days after his January 30 speech.

Congress has also been haggling over spending caps for domestic programs and the military as they seek to finalize a budget for the remainder of 2018.

But Republican leaders have acknowledged they will not meet a Thursday deadline for a spending bill, and will have to pass yet another stopgap measure this week — with help from Democrats — to avoid a government shutdown.

House Speaker **Paul Ryan** said that while both sides were “making progress” on a budget agreement, a temporary spending bill was necessary to keep the lights on in Washington.

“We’re still negotiating the contents and the duration of that,” he said.

Lawmakers are smarting from an embarrassing three-day shutdown last month, when Democrats refused to back a spending measure that did not break the immigration impasse.

Senate Majority Leader Mitch McConnell said this time he did not expect another threat of a government shutdown, which Trump critics blamed on Republicans but McConnell pinned on Democrats. “There’s no education in the second kick of a mule,” the Kentucky lawmaker said.

Warned

Complicating the legislative schedule, Treasury Secretary Steven Mnuchin has warned Congress that the Treasury has enough cash to pay its bills only through Feb 28 without hitting the debt limit and using extraordinary measures to keep payments flowing.

That is earlier than expected, the Congressional Budget Office said, because last year’s \$1.5 trillion tax cut is resulting in less federal revenue.

Raising the debt ceiling has led to high-risk political showdowns in recent years.

With the national debt exceeding \$20 trillion, some fiscal conservatives have signalled they may demand spending cuts in order to vote to raise the limit.

The crammed-to-do list is further jeopardized by the partisan feuding gripping Washington over an explosive Republican memorandum that Trump declassified on Friday.

House Intelligence Committee Chairman Devin Nunes argues in the document that the FBI engaged in abuse of power by relying on unsubstantiated evidence to track a Trump campaign aide.

In a strongly worded letter to the president, 10 top Democrats warned of “a constitutional crisis” should he use the memo as a pretext for firing the special prosecutor heading an investigation into possible collusion between Trump’s campaign and Moscow.

Against this toxic backdrop, lawmakers are bracing for a heavyweight brawl on immigration.

Last September, Trump decided to end the Obama-era program known as Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) on March 5, meaning that the beneficiaries, called “Dreamers”, could face deportation if Congress fails to act.

Last week, he unveiled a proposal that put Democrats in a bind. It would place 1.8 million immigrants, including some 700,000 Dreamers, on a pathway to citizenship — a top priority for the opposition.

But it would also require improving border security including \$25 billion for Trump’s border wall, ending the green-card visa

lottery, and curtailing the family reunification procedure that prioritizes relatives of US citizens immigrating to the country.

Democrats equated the plan with holding Dreamers “hostage” in exchange for anti-immigrant policies.

“Make no mistake, this plan is a complete nonstarter,” insisted Senator Kamala Harris.

Trump warned Democrats they would be making a mistake if they choose to block his “generous” proposal.

“We’ll either have something that’s fair and equitable and good and secure, or we’re going to have nothing at all,” he told Republican lawmakers at their winter retreat.

On Sunday, senior Democratic Senator Dick Durbin said he did not believe a shutdown would happen, but reminded McConnell that he pledged to bring the immigration issue to the floor for debate.

“That’s what we were looking for when there was a shutdown. We have achieved that goal. We’re moving forward,” Durbin told CNN.

Trump has received pushback from his own party.

Some hardcore conservatives have faulted him for ceding too much on immigrant legalization.

“Illegals have No Right to be here,” congressman Steve King tweeted. “This #Amnesty deal negotiates away American Sovereignty.”

But moderate Senate Republican Jeff Flake, a Trump critic, warned against “drastically cutting legal and necessary immigration flows,” saying Congress should not “shoehorn” the complex issue into a DACA fix.

Budget

In related news, the era of trillion-dollar budget deficits is about to make a comeback — and a brewing budget deal could mean their return comes just next year.

Talks on a budget-busting spending pact that would give whopping increases to both the Pentagon and domestic programs have been inching closer to an agreement, aides and lawmakers said.

GOP defense hawks are prevailing over the party’s depleted ranks of deficit hawks while Democrats leverage their influence to increase spending for domestic priorities such as combating opioid misuse.

Details are closely held and subject to change. But at issue is a two-year deal to increase crunching caps on spending set by a failed 2011 budget deal. Republicans have pushed for defense increases in the neighborhood of \$80 billion a year and have offered Democrats nearly as much — \$60 billion or so per year — for nondefense programs.

Add in \$80 billion to \$90 billion worth of hurricane aid for Texas, Florida and Puerto Rico, health care funding and money for Trump’s border security plan, and the final tally could total close to \$400 billion. The potential cost, over the 2018-19 budget years, would rival the deficit impact of last year’s tax measure over that period.

“Republicans for years have made all of these bold promises to rein in spending,” said Brian Riedl, a budget analyst at the conservative Manhattan Institute. “And they’re doing the opposite.”

The negotiations are bipartisan since it takes votes from Democrats to lift the budget caps and advance a follow-up omnibus spending bill, whose overall cost is likely to exceed \$1.2 trillion. That means domestic programs get their due, despite the opposition of conservatives.

Also:

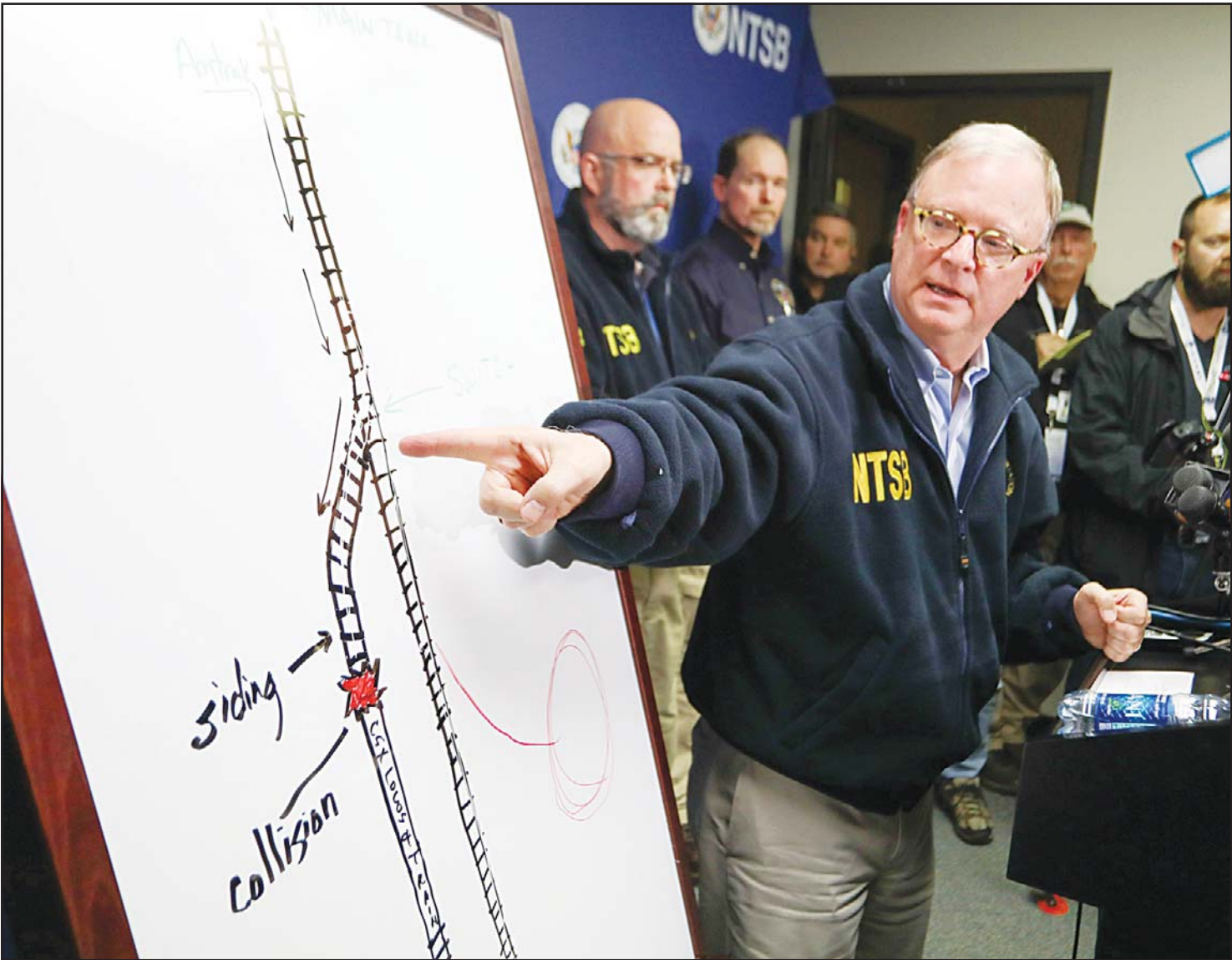
WASHINGTON: Two senators are introducing compromise legislation that would help achieve legal status for hundreds of thousands of immigrants who entered the US illegally as children.

The bill calls for bolstering border security by 2020. But it does not explicitly provide money for a border wall with Mexico, the focus of President **Donald Trump’s** immigration policies.

The plan is a more modest approach than Trump has sought for protecting “Dreamers”, young immigrants helped by the Obama-era Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals program.

It lacks Trump’s demands for protecting “Dreamers”, can sponsor for citizenship, and ending a visa lottery aimed at admitting more immigrants from diverse places including **Africa**.

The measure is by Republican Sen **John McCain** of **Arizona** and Delaware Democratic Sen **Chris Coons**.



National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Robert Sumwalt presents the ongoing investigation to the media during a press conference at SC Emergency Management Division in Cayce, South Carolina on Feb 4. (AFP)

GPS-based system could have prevented deadly train crash

Federal investigators spent a second day Monday at the site of a deadly train crash in South Carolina, where an Amtrak train was mistakenly sent off a main track and down a side spur — and into a parked freight train. The ensuing crash early Sunday killed two people and injured more than 100 passengers.

The investigation headed by the National Transportation Safety Board could take years, but federal investigators are already focusing on one critical factor: that a switch, set manually, may have caused the passenger train to barrel down the wrong track.

Moreover, authorities say the crash could have been prevented with a GPS-based system called “positive train control,” which knows the location of all trains and the positions of all switches in an area and is designed to prevent

two trains from traveling on the same track at the same time.

“It could have avoided this accident. That’s what it’s designed to do,” said National Transportation Safety Board Chairman Robert Sumwalt.

Regulators have demanded the implementation of positive train control for decades, and the technology is now in place in the Northeast, but railroads that operate tracks used by Amtrak elsewhere in the US have won repeated extensions from the government. The deadline for installing such equipment is now the end of 2018.

CSX Corp. — the freight railroad operator which runs that stretch of track — issued a statement expressing condolences but said nothing about the cause.

“Business as usual must end,” Democratic Sen. Richard Blumenthal of Connecticut said after this

latest crash.

Sumwalt said the passenger train hurtled down a side track near Cayce (CAYsee) around 2:45 am Sunday after a stop 10 miles (16 kms) north in Columbia because a switch had been locked in place, diverting it from the main line. A crew on the freight train had moved the switch to drive it from one side track — where it unloaded 34 train cars of automobiles — to the side track where it was parked. The switch was padlocked as it was supposed to be, Sumwalt said.

The system that operates the train signals in the area was down, so CSX dispatchers were operating them manually. Sumwalt said it was too early to know if the signal was red to warn the Amtrak crew that the switch was not set to continue along the main train line. (AP)

America

Schiff leaks info — Trump: US President Donald Trump on Monday accused US Representative Adam Schiff, the top Democrat on the House Intelligence Committee, of leaking “confidential” information.

The panel is conducting one of several investigations into whether Russia meddled in the 2016 presidential election. Trump has repeatedly maintained there was no collusion between him and his campaign and Russia.

“Adam (Schiff) leaves closed committee hearings to illegally leak confidential information.

Must be stopped!” Trump wrote in a post on Twitter.

On Friday, the House intelligence panel released a memo that alleged that the FBI and the Justice Department were biased against Trump in part of their investigation.

Trump said the memo vindicated him, but critics say it leaves out crucial context. Democrats have pushed to publish a rebuttal. (RTRS)

☐ ☐ ☐

‘Respect nuclear limits’: The United States, which unveiled a new aggressive nuclear strategy, has met the limits set on its arsenal under the New START Treaty, which enters a new phase Monday, and reminded Russia to uphold its commitments.

The strategic arms reduction treaty was signed by Washington and Moscow in 2010, and took effect in February 2011.

It calls for the gradual reduction over 10 years of the number of nuclear warheads held by both sides, limits on the number of delivery systems, a strict verification regime and data exchanges.



Naurt

State Department said in a statement.

Washington said it had already fulfilled its commitments by August 2017, said the statement issued by department spokeswoman **Heather Nauert**.

Russia has “repeatedly stated its commitment” to the treaty, including meeting the central limits, and we expect our upcoming data exchange under the treaty to reaffirm that commitment.”

On Thursday, Nauert said that Washington had “no reason to believe” that Russia would not meet its goals. “Within the next month or so, both countries will exchange their data under the strategic nuclear arsenals,

as we have done bilaterally under the treaty’s terms for the last seven years,” she said. (AFP)

☐ ☐ ☐

‘Ban bump stocks’: In the immediate aftermath of the deadliest mass shooting in modern US history, there was a fevered pitch to ban bump stocks, the device that allowed the shooter’s semi-automatic rifles to mimic the rapid fire of machine guns.

With that push stalled at the federal level, a handful of states and some cities are moving ahead with bans of their own.

Massachusetts and New Jersey — two states led by Republican governors — as well as the cities of Denver and Columbia, South Carolina, have enacted laws prohibiting the sale and possession of the devices, which were attached to a half-dozen of the long guns found in the hotel room of the Las Vegas shooter who in October killed

58 people and injured hundreds more attending a nearby outdoor concert. A little over a dozen other states are also considering bans on bump stocks.

Gun-control advocates say the push fits a pattern in gun politics: inaction in Washington that forces states to take the lead. Gun-rights advocates call it a knee-jerk reaction that will do little to stop bad guys from killing, and vow a legal challenge.

For Zach Elmore, the issue is deeply personal. His sister among those wounded in the Las Vegas attack. He finds hope in the statewide and local efforts to ban bump stocks. (AP)

☐ ☐ ☐

Chicago’s plan draws fury: Five years after the largest mass closure of public schools in an American city, Chicago is forging ahead with a plan to shutter four more in one of the city’s highest-crime and impover-

ished areas.

School officials are pitching the new closures around Englewood, a neighborhood on Chicago’s South Side, to make way for a new \$85 million school they insist will better serve students and reverse low enrollment. But some parents, students and activists are skeptical, saying they’re still reeling from the 2013 closures and the latest plan will make things worse, including the displacement of hundreds of mostly black and poor teenagers.

“The last thing they should do is close our schools,” said 16-year-old Miracle Boyd, a student at John Hope College Prep, which could close.

“They aren’t the ones sitting in those chairs five days a week struggling to learn because we don’t have the necessities we need as students. ... Why not use the \$85 million to improve our education and get our schools on the road to success?” (AP)

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World News Roundup

HealthCare

‘Going broke, not working’

Trump attacks UK’s healthcare system

WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (Agencies): US President Donald Trump on Monday attacked Britain’s public healthcare system in comments that are likely to call his much-delayed visit to the country further into doubt.

“The Democrats are pushing for Universal HealthCare while thousands of people are marching in the UK because their U system is going broke and not working,” he wrote in an early morning tweet.

“Dems want to greatly raise taxes for really bad and non-personal medical care. No thanks!”

The tweet came after thousands of people marched through central London on Saturday in support of the National Health Service, which is straining under the weight of winter demand.



May

NHS staffing levels have been in crisis for months, an issue made worse by a winter flu outbreak.

Despite its current woes, the National Health Service (NHS), which was created after World War II, is a revered institution and Trump’s comments are likely to stoke resentment.

The “special relationship” between Britain and the United States has shown some signs of strain since Trump came to office a year ago.

British Prime Minister **Theresa May** was the first foreign leader to visit Trump following his inauguration in January last year, when she invited him to make a state visit to Britain, hosted by Queen Elizabeth II.

The trip has been delayed, however, and Trump recently pulled out of a plan to open the new US embassy in London, a move British officials blamed on threats of mass protests.

Trump has also angered the British with previous controversial tweets, including retweeting an extremist group’s anti-Muslim propaganda and sparring with London mayor Sadiq Khan following a terror attack.

It is not certain why Trump chose to attack the NHS two days after the London protests.

Trump’s own attempts to reverse his predecessor’s healthcare reform, known as Obamacare, twice ended in failure, before his party succeeded in eliminating a key element – the so-called “individual mandate,” as part of tax reform.

The measure required individuals to buy coverage as a way to lower costs by ensuring that healthy people were part of insurance pools.

One possible explanation for Trump’s criticism was an appearance by Brexit champion Nigel Farage, a personal friend of the president, on Fox News earlier Monday in which he questioned the feasibility of universal healthcare and blamed the NHS’s predicament on immigrants.

Also:

NEW YORK: US nursing homes have significantly reduced the use of powerful antipsychotic drugs among their elderly residents, responding to pressure from many directions. Yet advocacy groups insist that overmedication remains a major problem, and want the pressure to intensify.

According to the latest data from the federal Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services, known as CMS, the percentage of long-term nursing home residents being given antipsychotic drugs dropped from about 24 percent in late 2011 to under 16 percent last year. Decreases were reported in all 50 states, with the biggest in **Tennessee, California and Arkansas.**

Dr Jerry Gurwitz, chief of geriatric medicine at the University of Massachusetts Medical School, depicts the overall decrease as “one of the most dramatic changes I’ve seen in my career.” He wonders, however, if some nursing homes might be finding other medications that sedate their patients into passivity without drawing the same level of scrutiny as antipsychotics.

Advocacy groups — including the **Washington-based Center for Medicare Advocacy** and **AARP Foundation Litigation** — say even the lower rate of antipsychotic usage is excessive, given federal warnings that elderly people with dementia face a higher risk of death when treated with such drugs.

“Given the dire consequences, it should be zero,” said attorney **Kelly Bagby** of the AARP foundation, which has engaged in several court cases challenging nursing home medication practices. Bagby contends that the drugs are frequently used for their sedative effect, not because they have any benefit to the recipients.

The advocacy groups’ long-running campaign was reinforced Monday with the release of a detailed report by Human Rights Watch urging federal and state authorities to take tougher measures against improper use of antipsychotic drugs.

“On paper, nursing home residents have strong legal protections of their rights, but in practice, enforcement is often lacking,” said the report, based on interviews with more than 300 people and visits to 109 nursing homes in six states.

Ten years ago, according to the Department of Health and Human Services, roughly 270,000 nursing home residents suffering from dementia were receiving antipsychotic drugs even though such medications are not approved to treat that condition. The powerful class of drugs is intended, instead, to treat serious mental illnesses such as schizophrenia and bipolar disorder.

Analyzing the latest government data, Human Rights Watch estimates there are now about 179,000 people in nursing homes who get antipsychotics every week without having a diagnosis for which the drugs are approved.

“Antipsychotic drugs alter consciousness and can adversely affect an individual’s ability to interact with others,” the new report says. “They can also make it easier for understaffed facilities, with direct care workers inadequately trained in dementia care, to manage the people who live there.”

The report also says that nursing homes, in violation of government regulations, often administer antipsychotic drugs without obtaining consent from residents or the relatives who represent them.

Hannah Flamm, the report’s lead author, said the recent data showing a decline in antipsychotic usage demonstrated how extensive the overmedication problem had been.



President Donald Trump gives the thumbs-up as he and First Lady Melania view the Florida Atlantic University Marching Band at Trump International Golf Club in West Palm Beach, Florida on Feb 4, as they arrive for a Super Bowl party. (AP)

Brexit

Not a minute to lose in Brexit talks: Barnier

‘UK won’t be with EU customs union’

LONDON, Feb 5, (AFP): The EU’s chief negotiator Michel Barnier stressed the urgency of Brexit talks ahead of a meeting with Prime Minister Theresa May on Monday, with her government still deeply divided on the negotiations.

“My feeling is that we have not a minute to lose because we want to achieve a deal,” Barnier told the BBC and Sky News television as he left for London. Barnier will also meet the UK’s Brexit minister David Davis ahead of talks between British and European Union officials in Brussels from Tuesday to Friday.

Reports in recent days that some government ministers will seek to keep Britain in a customs union with the EU in order to safeguard trade ties have raised tensions between pro-EU and pro-Brexit factions.

But ahead of Barnier’s visit, May’s spokesman said that Britain did not want to be in a customs union with the EU once it leaves the bloc.

“It is not the government’s policy to be a member of the customs union or a customs union,” he told a daily briefing on Monday, saying the two

options were instead “a new customs partnership” or “a highly streamlined customs arrangement”.

London and Brussels struck a preliminary deal on key Brexit issues in December but are yet to discuss the conditions for a post-Brexit transition period and future trade relations.

May has yet to bring together her divided government to produce a final plan.

Vision

High-profile pro-Brexit ministers Boris Johnson and Michael Gove are later this week set for a cabinet meeting showdown with europhile ministers, led by finance minister Philip Hammond, as they battle to shape Britain’s post-Brexit vision.

Johnson and Gove are ready to deliver an ultimatum to prevent May backtracking on plans to fully leave the customs union, according to The Sunday Times.

Brexit supporters within May’s Conservative Party would be prepared to replace the premier with Johnson and install Gove as his deputy, with influential backbencher Jacob Rees-

Mogg drafted in as finance minister, the newspaper reported.

Such a move would enrage the sizeable rump of hardcore pro-EU Conservative MPs, raising the spectre of another general election as May is running a minority government.

The internal tensions exploded into public view last week when Rees-Mogg, who is the bookmaker’s favourite to become the next Conservative Party leader, accused Hammond’s department of “fiddling the books” in providing gloomy forecasts of Brexit’s economic impact.

Conservative MP and Brexit supporter Bernard Jenkin wrote in The Sunday Telegraph newspaper that May “can only command a majority in parliament on her present policy” -- a thinly veiled threat that Brexiteers would be prepared to bring down her vulnerable government.

Pro-EU interior minister Amber Rudd hit back on Sunday, telling BBC television: “I have a surprise for the Brexiteers, which is the committee that meets in order to help make these decisions is more united than they think.”



Lauri Love waves outside The Royal Courts of Justice in London on Feb 5. (AP)

Britain

Love US extradition blocked: British judges on Monday rejected a US request for the extradition of a man accused of hacking into thousands of US government computers in a ruling that could set a precedent for similar pending cases.

Lauri Love, 33, faces charges in the United States for allegedly hacking into the networks of the US Federal Reserve, US Army and NASA, among others, in 2012 and 2013.

“The reason I’ve gone through this ordeal is not just to save myself from being kidnapped and locked up for 99 years in a country I’ve never visited,” said Love, who has dual British and Finnish citizenship. Love suffers from Asperger’s syndrome and has also been diagnosed with depression. He was arrested at his home in Britain in October 2013.

“But it’s to set a precedent whereby this will not happen to other people in the future,” Love told reporters outside High Court in London. (AFP)



Grant settles phone-hacking case:

British actor Hugh Grant has settled a legal case against Mirror Group Newspapers (MGN) after the company admitted that reporters at its three tabloid titles had hacked into his voicemails over a 10-year period to get scoops, he said on Monday.

Grant, who is known internationally for

roles in films such as “Four Weddings and a Funeral” and “Notting Hill”, won substantial damages from MGN and will donate them to Hacked Off, a group that campaigns against press intrusion.

Grant was one of the highest profile victims of phone-hacking by reporters, a

practice that became widespread at some of Britain’s fiercely competitive tabloids but was exposed during a major scandal in 2011.

Most of the focus at the time was on the News of the World, a Sunday tabloid owned by Rupert Murdoch which the media mogul shut down at the height of the scandal. (RTRS)

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Germany

Talks spill into overtime

Merkel govt confidence growing on striking deal

BERLIN, Feb 5, (Agencies): Talks between the top German parties on forming a new government for Chancellor **Angela Merkel**'s fourth term spilled into overtime Monday but confidence appeared to be growing they would strike a deal.

More than four months after Germany's general election, marathon weekend negotiations failed to yield the desired breakthrough on all outstanding differences. However both sides sounded upbeat about the chance for an agreement by a self-imposed Tuesday deadline.

"We've reached the point where we can get a good outcome," conservative Armin Laschet, premier of Germany's most populous state North Rhine-Westphalia, told public broadcaster ARD.

"I am very confident that we'll reach a deal" on Monday, Justice Minister Heiko Maas of the Social Democrats (SPD) told the same programme.

As the parties returned to the negotiating table Monday morning, a deputy leader of Merkel's Christian Democrats (CDU), Volker Bouffier, admitted the talks could drag on until early Tuesday to iron out the final kinks.

Europe's top economic power has been locked in political limbo since an inconclusive general election in September.

Although Merkel and the CDU came out on top, they failed to secure a ruling majority, leading to the longest coalition negotiations in post-war history.

The Social Democrats, Germany's second largest party, have served under Merkel in a right-left "grand coalition" for two of her three terms since 2005.

But governing in her shadow has cost them vital support and they scored a historic low 20.5 percent in the September poll.

□ □ □

German police say four bodies have been found at a house in southwestern Germany along with indications of elevated carbon monoxide levels in the building.

Police said the bodies were found in Esslingen, a town near Stuttgart. They said that the cause of death was still being investigated.

Authorities described it as an accident.



Merkel



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan (left), shakes hands with Pope Francis (right), prior to their meeting in Vatican City on Feb 05. (AFP)

Europe

'Muslims presumed guilty': Salah Abdeslam, the prime surviving suspect in the 2015 Paris attacks, accused European courts of denying Muslims a presumption of innocence as he refused to cooperate on the first day of a trial in Belgium.

"I do not wish to answer any questions," he told the judge, Marie-France Keutgen, when she asked if he would give evidence in a case in which he is accused of attempted murder of police in Brussels three days before his eventual arrest there.

"I was asked to come. I came," said Abdeslam, who has been in prison near Paris awaiting trial in France over the attacks that killed 130 people there in November 2015. He was detained in his native Brussels four months later, in March 2016. (RTRS)

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Macron's party loses 2 seats: French President **Emmanuel Macron**'s party lost two by-elections for parliamentary seats on Sunday in the first electoral test since it won a commanding majority last June.

The two lower house seats were won by the conservative Republicans party, in a boost for its new leader, Laurent Wauquiez, a hard-hitting critic of Macron. Wauquiez dismisses Macron as out of touch with rural France and weak on security.

Macron, whose pro-Europe, pro-business Republic On The Move party still controls

309 seats in the 577-seat National Assembly, has seen his popularity wane since he took power.

"It's a blow which severely punishes the government's policies whose impact on the ground is being judged harshly by our fellow citizens: tax rises for the middle class and pensioners and an unprecedented explosion in immigration and crime," Wauquiez said in a statement. (RTRS)

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Shooting 'triggered by murder': A far-right supporter suspected of wounding six Africans in a shooting spree in central Italy said the "trigger" for his attacks was the murder of an Italian woman allegedly by a Nigerian asylum seeker, media reports said Sunday, with immigration shaping up to be a key issue in elections a month from now.

Luca Traini was arrested and taken into custody after drive-by attacks in the town of Macerata wounded five men and one woman from Ghana, Mali and Nigeria on Saturday.



Salah



Macron

The shootings came a day after a Nigerian asylum-seeker and drug dealer was arrested in the same town for the murder of an 18-year-old woman, whose dismembered body was discovered in suitcases.

"I was driving to the gym when I heard on the radio about the 18-year-old girl," the daily Corriere della Sera quoted Traini as telling investigators.

"Instinctively I turned around, I went home, I opened the safe and took the pistol and decided to kill them all."

After the shootings, Traini, 28, allegedly got out of his car, made a fascist salute with a tricolour Italian flag draped over his shoulders and shouted "Viva Italia", or "Long Live Italy", and "Italy for Italians", media reports said. (AFP)

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Pope got victim's letter: Pope Francis received a victim's letter in 2015 that graphically detailed how a priest sexually abused him and how other Chilean clergy ignored it, contradicting the pope's recent insistence that no victims had come forward to denounce the cover-up, the letter's author and members of Francis' own sex-abuse commission have told The Associated Press.

The fact that Francis received the eight-page letter, obtained by the AP, challenges his insistence that he has "zero tolerance" for sex abuse and cover-ups. It also calls into question his stated empathy with abuse survivors, compounding the most serious crisis of his five-year papacy.

The scandal exploded last month when Francis' trip to South America was marred by

protests over his vigorous defense of Bishop Juan Barros, who is accused by victims of covering up the abuse by the Rev Fernando Karadima. During the trip, Francis callously dismissed accusations against Barros as "slander," seemingly unaware that victims had placed him at the scene of Karadima's crimes. (AP)

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Investigators summon Navalny: Investigators in Russia summoned opposition leader **Alexei Navalny** for questioning on Monday, saying they were looking into allegations he had assaulted policemen at an anti-Kremlin protest last month.

Around 1,500 people in Moscow and hundreds more in cities across Russia took to the streets on Jan 28 in a protest organised by Navalny to support a boycott of presidential elections in March.

Incumbent Vladimir Putin is widely expected to be re-elected, but Navalny says he has been unfairly barred from running over what he says is a trumped-up suspended prison sentence. (RTRS)

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Ukraine court rejects appeal: A Ukrainian appellate court on Monday rejected an appeal by opposition leader Mikheil Saakashvili for protection against his possible extradition, news agency Interfax Ukraine quoted Saakashvili's lawyer as saying.

The former president of Georgia entered Ukraine last September despite being stripped of his Ukrainian citizenship in a protracted standoff with the Kiev authorities. He is wanted in Georgia on four charges including abuse of office, which he says are trumped up.

Saakashvili had earlier applied to the Kiev district court to be given the status of a person in need of additional protection, which the court rejected. (RTRS)

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Azerbaijan calls presidential poll: Azerbaijan's strongman Ilham Aliyev on Monday called a snap presidential vote for April, six months ahead of schedule, as opposition politicians slammed the surprise move.

"Set the date of the election of the President of the Republic of Azerbaijan on April 11," Aliyev ordered in a decree posted on his website without providing an immediate explanation for the move.

The oil-rich country was initially set to hold the vote on Oct 17.

Last week, the deputy chair of the ruling Yeni Azerbaijan party, Ali Akhmedov, said that Aliyev planned to run for a fourth consecutive term. (AFP)

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Aloo Gobi



Maah-ki-Dal

World News Roundup

Asia

Gui's daughter fears grow

S. Korea appeals court 'frees' Samsung heir

SEOUL, South Korea, Feb 5, (Agencies): Samsung heir **Lee Jae-yong** was freed Monday after a South Korean appeals court gave him a 2-1/2-year suspended jail sentence for corruption in connection with a scandal that toppled the country's president.

The Seoul High Court softened the original ruling against Lee, rejecting most of the bribery charges leveled against Lee by prosecutors who sought a 12-year prison term.

While the ruling clears the way for the Samsung vice-chairman to resume his role at the helm of the industrial giant founded by his grandfather after a year in prison, he faces a slew of challenges outside prison.

Chief among them will be winning trust that he is capable of running South Korea's biggest company, and assuaging public anger among those who viewed the court's surprise decision as a setback in the war on corruptions.

"The past year was a precious time for personal reflection," Lee told reporters waiting outside the gates of a detention center in southern Seoul.

Lee's first stop from the prison was a Samsung hospital where his father has been hospitalized after suffering a heart attack in 2014.

Lee was charged with offering \$38 million in bribes to former President Park Geun-hye and her confidant Choi Soon-sil, embezzling Samsung funds, hiding assets overseas, concealing proceeds from criminal activities and perjury.

The appeals court said Lee was unable to reject the then-president's request to financially support her confidante and was coerced into making the payments. The court still found Lee guilty of giving 3.6 billion won (\$3.3 million) in bribes for equestrian training of Choi's daughter and of embezzling the money from Samsung funds.

Lee's lawyer, Lee Injae, told reporters that the Samsung vice chairman still plans to appeal his conviction. Prosecutors also were expected to appeal the court's ruling, making it almost certain the case will go to the Supreme Court.

S. Korean fire death toll hits 43: The death toll from a devastating hospital fire in South Korea rose to 43 on Monday, officials said, making it the country's deadliest blaze for 15 years.

Two men, both of them in their 80s, who had been treated in other hospitals since the fire late last month, succumbed to their injuries, said local authorities in Miryang.

A total of 149 people were injured, including one who is currently in a critical condition.

Fire ripped through the Sejong hospital in Miryang on January 26, sending toxic fumes sweeping through the six-storey building.

US envoy pitches arms sales: The top US diplomat overseeing arms sales said Monday she would be promoting American weaponry at the largest air show in Asia, where China's military footprint and political influence are surging.

A large US delegation at the Singapore Air Show is doing "everything we can" to encourage Southeast Asian governments to purchase US-made arms like the F-35 fighter jet, Ambassador Tina Kaidanow told reporters in a telephone briefing. She repeatedly sought to dispel the notion that US influence was in retreat.

The Trump administration in December outlined a new national security strategy that placed an emphasis on countering China's rise.

China gas leak kills 8: Gas leaking from a pipeline at a steel mill in the southern Chinese province of Guangdong killed eight people and injured 10 early Monday, local authorities reported.

The Shaoguan city government said in a post on its microblog that the leak occurred at 3 am at the Shaoguan Iron and Steel company's Songshan plant. It said the rescue and recovery effort was underway and the cause of the leak was under investigation.

Gui's daughter fears grow: The daughter of missing Swedish publisher Gui Minhai who was snatched in China last month says she fears she may never see him again and has urged the international community to take action.

Gui was arrested on a train to Beijing just over two weeks ago while accompanied by two Swedish diplomats – the second time he has disappeared in murky circumstances into Chinese custody.

His daughter Angela Gui, 23, told AFP she had heard nothing from him since and had received no information about where he might be.



Smoke billows from the site where a Japanese military helicopter carrying two crewmembers crashed in Kanzaki, southwestern Japan on Feb 5, ripping the top floor off a house and setting it on fire. (AP)

One crew dead, another missing in Japan army helicopter crash

One crew member was confirmed dead and another was missing Monday after a Japanese military helicopter crashed in a residential area in the southwest of the country, reportedly injuring a local girl and setting a home on fire.

A 26-year-old co-pilot was found unconscious following the crash in the town of Kanzaki and later confirmed dead, a defence ministry spokesman said.

"We are still searching for the 43-year-old pilot," the

spokesman told AFP, retracting earlier remarks made by Defence Minister Itsunori Onodera, who said both crew members on board were retrieved "in a state of cardiac and respiratory arrest."

That language is often used by Japanese officials before deaths are officially confirmed.

Quoting local fire department officials, the Asahi Shimbun daily said an 11-year-old girl who was in the house when the helicopter crashed was sent to hos-

pital after injuring her knee. Immediate confirmation of the report was not available.

Japan's NHK television showed a thick plume of grey smoke rising from the site of the crash in between the rooftops of local houses, some 300 metres (1,000 feet) away from an elementary school.

Local firefighters could be seen running through the streets with red fire hoses as people were evacuated from the area. (AFP)

Japan

Toguchi wins Nago mayoral election

US base relocation to proceed: Abe

TOKYO, Feb 5, (Agencies): Prime Minister Shinzo Abe Monday welcomed the result of a mayoral election in the southern Japanese island of Okinawa seen as key to pushing ahead with a decades-old plan to relocate a US military base.

Taketoyo Toguchi, a candidate backed by Abe's ruling bloc, narrowly won Sunday's vote in the town of Nago in northern Okinawa, preventing incumbent Susumu Inamine from serving a third term, the local election board said.

Inamine is a strong opponent of the joint US-Japan project to move the US Marines' Futenma Air Station from an urban area in the south of Okinawa to Nago, which lies on the coast. Toguchi has not openly discussed his position on the relocation plan, running instead on a pledge to boost the city's tourism.

Local media had dubbed the race a "proxy war" between Okinawa governor Takeshi Onaga, who is opposed to the US base plan, and Abe's government, with the vote seen as a precursor to Okinawa's gubernatorial election later this year.

Abe welcomed Toguchi's victory in comments Monday.

"I'm really grateful for the victory and I appreciate Nago citizens for electing him,"

he told reporters.

"On the base issue, I will proceed with the plan with the understanding of the citizens," Abe said.

Japan and the United States agreed in 1996 to move the base from the town of Ginowan to the Nago coast but the plan has been stalled due to opposition from many residents of Okinawa, which hosts the bulk of some 47,000 US troops based in Japan.

Opponents of the base want it relocated out of Okinawa altogether.

Fuelled

Several recent incidents have fuelled local opposition, including an emergency landing by an American military helicopter two weeks ago.

A series of crimes including rapes, assaults, hit-and-run and drink-driving accidents by US personnel have also triggered protests on Okinawa, and are a frequent irritant in relations between close security allies Japan and the United States.

Okinawa was the site of a major World War II battle that was followed by a 27-year US occupation of the island, and it would serve as a launchpad for any American military activity in Asia.

In Sunday's election, Toguchi won 20,389 votes to beat Inamine, who received 16,931 votes.

The election came just days before US Vice-President Mike Pence was scheduled to visit Japan this week on a trip expected to focus on security ties in face of North Korea's nuclear and missile threat.

Japan's Supreme Court ruled in 2016 in favour of a government plan to relocate the US military base, dealing a blow to islanders' efforts to get rid of the base altogether.

Japan's central government and authorities on Okinawa — reluctant host to the bulk of US military forces in the country — have bickered for years over the plan, first agreed between Tokyo and Washington in 1996.

Many Okinawa residents have long associated the US military presence with crime, pollution and accidents, and resentment was rekindled by a spate of incidents involving US military aircraft. In December, a window fell from a US helicopter onto a school sports field, fanning safety concerns.

The Nago result could bode ill for Okinawa Governor Takeshi Onaga, another base opponent who is up for re-election later this year.

Asia

'Probe Duterte's bank transactions': A Philippine senator and staunch critic of President **Rodrigo Duterte** on Monday filed a resolution seeking a legislative inquiry into whether Duterte and his eldest daughter had concealed assets amounting to almost \$2 million.

Senator Antonio Trillanes asked the Senate committee on banks, financial institutions and currencies to probe deposits and investments involving their accounts, which he said could show possible violations of the country's anti-money laundering law.

Duterte has cultivated an image as a humble man who disdains opulence and is uninterested in wealth and materialism.

Trillanes has long accused Duterte of failing to disclose his wealth going back to his time as mayor of southern Davao City prior to winning the presidency in May 2016. Duterte has repeatedly denied wrongdoing and promised to resign if there was proof. (RTRS)

Indonesia landslides kill 2: Indonesia's capital braced for floods Monday as torrential rain triggered landslides in neighboring West Java, killing at least two people.

The police chief in West Java's Bogor district, Andi M. Dicky Pastika, said rescuers have found two bodies.

Hundreds of people including police, soldiers and residents were digging through the debris with their hands, shovels and hoes for four people who were still missing, he said. Tractors and bulldozers were arriving in the worst-affected area of Riung Gunung village to help with the rescue effort. National Disaster Mitigation Agency spokesman Sutopo Purwo Nugroho said landslides in four areas along the hilly resort town of Puncak have blocked the main road connecting the area to Jakarta.

He said Jakarta, with more than 30 million people in its greater metropolitan area, has raised its flood alert to the highest level. (AP)

Ex-oil official gets life in jail: A high-profile former Vietnamese oil executive was sentenced to life in jail for embezzlement on

Monday, two weeks after was also imprisoned for life on similar charges in a separate case, state media reported.

Trinh Xuan Thanh, a former official whom Germany said was kidnapped by Vietnamese



Duterte



Thanh

Subcontinent

India, Pakistan trade accusations: Indian and Pakistani officials traded accusations following the deaths of four Indian soldiers and one Pakistani civilian, who were killed during an exchange of gunfire along the highly militarized de facto border that divides the disputed region of Kashmir between the nuclear-armed rivals. Two Pakistani children and two Indian soldiers were injured, officials said.

An Indian official says Pakistan started firing artillery and small arms Sunday onto Indian positions, while a Pakistani official says Indian forces started the violence by firing onto the Pakistani side.

Each said their forces returned fire only in retaliation. Both officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to speak to reporters.

India and Pakistan often accuse each other of violating a 2003 cease-fire agreement. Both countries accuse the other of initiating border skirmishes leading to the deaths of soldiers and civilians. Tensions have increased since the Hindu nationalist government of Prime Minister Narendra Modi came to power in India in 2014. (AP)

'Abuses could spark conflict': The UN human rights chief warned Monday that possible acts of

"genocide and ethnic cleansing" against Myanmar's Rohingya Muslim minority could fuel a religious-based conflict that spreads beyond the country's borders. "Myanmar faces a very serious crisis — with a potentially severe impact on the security of the region," UN High Commissioner for Human Rights **Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein** said during a speech in Jakarta.

His remarks follow the publication of a report last week about mass graves of Rohingya in Myanmar's crisis-hit Rakhine state, where government troops have been accused of waging an ethnic cleansing campaign against the minority.

Nearly 700,000 Rohingya have fled to bordering Bangladesh since last August.

Myanmar denied the mass grave report and wider allegations of rights abuses, saying it launched a proportionate crackdown on Rohingya rebels.

But it has blocked reporters and UN investigators from independently accessing the conflict zone and investigating refugee claims about a genocide. (AFP)

Maldives won't enforce SC order: The politi-

cal crisis in the Maldives deepened Monday, as the government of the island nation said it would not obey a Supreme Court order to free a group of imprisoned opposition leaders.

The surprise judicial ruling last week has led to an increasingly tense standoff between the Supreme Court and the government of President Yameen Abdul Gayoom, with protests spilling into the streets of the capital, Male, and soldiers in riot gear deployed to the parliament building to stop lawmakers from meeting.

On Monday, Legal Affairs Minister Azima Shakoor said that "the government does not believe that the Supreme Court ruling to release the political prisoners can be enforced."

She explained the decision by saying that the Supreme Court had not acted on a series of government letters saying there were "numerous challenges" to implementing it. On Sunday, a Supreme Court statement said that "there are no obstacles in implementing the ruling and releasing political prisoners and that this has been informed to the Prosecutor General's office."

There was no immediate comment from Yameen's main rival, exiled former President Mohammed Nasheed, who is among the prisoners ordered freed.

The Supreme Court ruled that the political leaders' guilty verdicts had been politically influenced. The ruling has led to protests by opposition supporters urging the government to obey the order. (AP)

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Ex-president barred in Ecuador

US mulling sanctions on Venezuela oil: Tillerson

Buenos Aires, Feb. 5, (Agencies): The United States said Sunday it has not ruled out sanctions on Venezuelan oil as it turns the screw on President **Nicolas Maduro**, but is wary of hurting the country's people.

Secretary of State Rex Tillerson is in Argentina during a tour of Latin America to bolster a common front against Venezuela's bid to hold a presidential election that opponents deem illegitimate.

The top US diplomat has received support from other governments in the Americas, including on Sunday from his Argentine counterpart Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie, but some are cautious about sanctions.

At a joint news conference, Tillerson — a former chief of oil giant ExxonMobil — confirmed the ultimate option of sanctioning Venezuela's key oil sector is under consideration, but that Washington shares its allies' concerns.

Oil-rich and once one of the wealthiest countries in Latin America, Venezuela under Maduro faces economic collapse and widespread popular protest. The US, Canada and the European Union have imposed economic sanctions targeting Maduro loyalists seen as profiteers or human rights abusers.

Tillerson did not push back against the suggestion that sanctions on oil might also hurt US companies that have built refineries in the southern United States geared to accept Venezuelan crude.

"Obviously sanctioning oil or prohibiting the oil to be sold in the United States ... is something we continue to consider," Tillerson said, while acknowledging Faurie's concerns.

Ecuador voters ban Correa: Ecuadorans on Sunday voted to bar ex-president Rafael Correa from being able to make a comeback in 2021 by unmistakably back-



Maduro

ing a referendum question on reimposing presidential term limits.

Initial results from the plebiscite called by Correa's successor-turned-foe, current President Lenin Moreno, showed 64 percent of ballots in favor of restoring the measure which prevents presidents from running indefinitely.

Correa had scrapped it in 2015.

Virtually as many — 63 percent of ballots — also approved restructuring a body Correa had set up to select authority figures such as judges, effectively wiping away the ex-president's legacy over the state.

Minutes before the National Electoral Council gave the numbers, Moreno hailed the "clear and overwhelming victory."

The results signified a win for Moreno in his struggle with Correa for control of their deeply divided leftist ruling Country Alliance party.

Singer wins Costa Rica polls: Conservative evangelical Christian singer Fabricio Alvarado Munoz will face a center-left ruling party candidate in a run-off for Costa Rica's presidency in April, after winning a first round on Sunday by sharply opposing gay marriage.

The 43-year-old Alvarado Munoz, the lone elected lawmaker for the evangelical National Restoration Party, shot to prominence as a candidate after denouncing a court ruling calling on Costa Rica to give civil marriage rights to same-sex couples.

Gross slams US: When Alan Gross heard the Trump administration's renewed US push to expand internet in Cuba, disbelief washed over the American who spent five years in a Cuban jail for trying to establish clandestine communication service on the Communist-run island.

"My first response was 'Are you kidding me?'" Gross said in a telephone interview with Reuters.

Gross worked in Cuba in 2009 for a US-government funded program to promote political change by increasing internet access in a country that has one of the lowest web penetration rates in the world.



US Secretary of State Rex Tillerson (left), and Argentine Foreign Minister Jorge Faurie give a news conference at the Foreign Ministry in Buenos Aires, Argentina on Feb. 4. Tillerson is on a weeklong trip to Latin America. (AP)

Africa

France freezes DRC gen's assets: France has frozen the financial assets of a Congolese general placed on the UN's sanctions list for supporting a massacre of civilians by a suspected militia in 2014 and 2015, according to a notice published Sunday.

The government will freeze the "funds and financial resources" in France belonging to General Muhindo Akili Mundos, an ally of President Joseph Kabila, as well as those of three chiefs of other militia groups.

The notice did not say how much money or other assets they currently have in France.

The United Nations imposed sanctions on the general on Friday over the killings of at least 400 civilians in the Beni region of the Democratic Republic of Congo by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a Ugandan Islamist group, from August 2014 to June 2015.

The UN's peacekeeping mission in the country said Mundos, the commander of the Congolese army's operations against the militia, "recruited and equipped ex-combatants from local armed groups to participate in extrajudicial executions and massacres by the Allied Democratic Forces".

The three militia leaders on the sanctions list include Guidon Shimiray Mwissa, from the NDC-R militia, who is accused of recruiting "child soldiers". (AFP)

US investigator killed: Kenya police and officials say an American investigator into the illegal ivory and rhino horn trade has been found stabbed to death in his house in the Karen neighborhood.

Nicolas Kamwende, head of criminal investigations in Nairobi, said Monday that a family member went to **Esmond Bradley Martin's** house Sunday to check on him after he did not respond to phone calls and found the body on a bed with a stab wound to the neck.

Conservationist Paula Kahumbu said Martin led investigations into the illegal trade of elephant ivory and rhino horn that threatens the two species with extinction. Kahumbu said he was at the forefront of exposing ivory traffickers in the US, Congo, Vietnam, Nigeria, Angola, China and recently Myanmar. (RTRS)

ANC party mulls Zuma's fate: South Africa's ruling party on Monday faced one of its biggest challenges since the end of white minority rule in 1994, struggling to resolve a leadership crisis amid increasing calls for scandal-tainted President **Jacob Zuma** to resign.

Top leaders of the ruling African National Congress met Zuma at his Pretoria residence late Sunday for a discussion that one delegate had said would focus on the "best interests" of the party and the country. However, there was no announcement Monday about the results of the meeting, days ahead of a state of the nation address that Zuma is scheduled to deliver in parliament.

South Africa's political opposition has said Zuma is a thoroughly discredited figure who should not deliver the speech in Cape Town on Thursday, and that the occasion should be postponed until the ANC party sorts out its internal conflict. Many ruling party members want Deputy President Cyril Ramaphosa, who replaced Zuma as party president in December and has talked tough on corruption, to become state president as well so that the party can



Zuma



Martin

recover lost popularity ahead of 2019 elections.

The party, which was the main anti-apartheid movement during decades of conflict, has led South Africa since the end of white minority rule and drew moral standing from its association with Nelson Mandela, the country's first black president. However, corruption scandals and mismanagement have sapped some support in recent years. (AP)

Guinea opp slams poll: Guinean opposition leaders on Sunday denounced the west African country's long-delayed local elections as fraudulent, citing vote rigging in polling stations across the west African country. "There is fraud at the national level," said former prime minister Sidiya Toure after polls closed at 1800 GMT.

"We are seeing problems, especially concerning ink, in a lot of polling stations," added Toure, who heads the opposition Union of Republican Forces (URF).

The local elections are the first since the end of the era of military dictatorship and follow eight years of delays blamed on a lack of funds, political infighting and the 2013-16 Ebola crisis. (AFP)

Boko Haram kills two: Boko Haram fighters stormed a village in northeast Nigeria and killed two people, a local resident and a security source said Monday, as the military again maintained the jihadists had been defeated.

The attack happened on Sunday evening at Alau-Kofa village, some 12 kms (7.5 miles) from the Borno state capital, Maiduguri.

"Boko Haram came to our village last night at about 8:00 pm (1900 GMT) firing guns and RPGs (rocket-propelled grenades)," Bulama Bukar, who lives in Alau-Kofa, told AFP.

"Two people were burnt alive and the whole village was burnt, along with our food."

Bukar, whose father was shot in the leg during the attack, said the jihadists "specifically came to steal our cattle" but were forced to abandon the herds when soldiers arrived. (AFP)

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Environment

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Cape Town & Miami help fight water risks

BARCELONA, Feb 5, (Agencies): As drought-hit Cape Town faces the prospect of its taps running dry as soon as April, it is joining a project to work out how cities can better prepare for water shocks and stresses in the future.

Engineering firm Arup will collaborate with five cities this year to develop a set of practical tools that will help urban areas deal with too little or too much water.

The four others are Amman, Mexico City, Greater Miami and Hull in England.

The aim is to produce a guide for cities of all sizes to understand and measure the resilience of their water systems.

"A changing climate coupled with rapid urbanisation is increasing the frequency of water-related crises facing cities," **Mark Fletcher**, leader of Arup's global water business, said in a statement.

"Increasingly, unpredictable rainfall, flooding and droughts are impacting cities across their water cycle," he added.

The cities testing the City Water Resilience Framework (CWRP) - which will later be made available for others around the world to use - were chosen for their varied locations, sizes and water problems.

South Africa's Cape Town, with a population of 3.7 million, is suffering from severe drought after three years of low rainfall, threatening water supplies for its residents, businesses and tourism industry.

Amman, the capital city of Jordan, has no sources of water nearby and regularly experiences drought, while lower-lying parts are inundated when it rains heavily.

Mexico City, a mega-city of 21.3 million people, depends on depleting aquifers and risks running out of water one day. Built on land that was once a lake, it is also prone to flooding.

Greater Miami and the Beaches has a high groundwater table and complex canal system, making it especially vulnerable to rising sea levels and tidal flooding.

The British port of Hull, meanwhile, has experienced extensive floods in recent years, with 90 percent of the small city standing below the high-tide line.

Explore

Martin Shouler, CWRP project manager at Arup, told the Thomson Reuters Foundation the new approach would explore the links between cities and the basins that furnish their natural water supply.

"Our clients are beginning to understand ... that when it comes to water, you can't think of a city in splendid isolation - it is part of its catchment," he said. "Vice versa, the city then impacts on its catchment when its water discharges back into the ecosystem."

As part of this wider view, the project will bring in different groups like farmers whose activities around a city affect its water supply, he added.

Andrew Salkin of 100 Resilient Cities (100RC) noted that, of the more than 1,000 cities that had applied to join its network to help them tackle modern-day pressures, over 60 percent said water issues posed "critical resilience risks".

The five working on the new water framework in 2018 - four of which belong to 100RC - will share lessons and expertise with "the many cities around the world grappling with water challenges", he added.

Other partners in the project include The Rockefeller Foundation, the World Bank, the University of Massachusetts Amherst and the Alliance for Global Water Adaptation.

Shouler said mapping water risks would help urban planners, city governments and other decision-makers come up with ways to prevent, prepare for, respond to and recover from potential crises such as water shortages or floods.

Once cities have identified water-related challenges, they can set priorities, devise solutions and look for investors.

"Once it becomes more obvious what those pathways to resilience might be ... it could well help attract money into this area," said Shouler.

Also:

CAPE TOWN: Officials in Cape Town appealed on Monday for residents to be vigilant against health risks caused by efforts to save or reuse water as the South African city's drought worsens.

The city is grappling with a listeriosis outbreak and a doubling of typhoid cases in the past year.

It has now urged residents to continue hand washing to maintain hygiene standards - despite water shortages.

"This is the season where the germs have a way of propagating and spreading," the city's health manager, **Virginia De Azevedo**, told a press briefing.

"We are talking faecal-oral contamination of the water, the food and the hands... In the health facilities, we are all on alert."

De Azevedo warned that hand sanitiser gels were often an inadequate substitute for hand-washing with potable water.

"You can still wash your hands without wasting water," she said.

Capetonians have been urged to use just 50 litres (13.2 US gallons) of water per day in an effort to delay the arrival of "Day Zero" when most residents will have their taps shut off.

After "Day Zero", currently forecast for April 16, many of the four million residents of South Africa's second city will be forced to queue at some 200 standpipes for a daily allocation of 25 litres.

Health officials also warned that residents could be putting themselves at danger by trying to purify dirty water, not boiling natural spring water before consumption and using untested boreholes.

"If they are taking water from the springs they must boil it or use purification tablets," said De Azevedo.

"The public must be aware of what are the water sources that are safe."

"We are aware that cholera is a very big threat and that typhoid is a very big threat," she added, referring to other parts of the world that have also suffered chronic water shortages.



This Dec 28, 2017 photo made available by SpaceX shows a Falcon Heavy rocket in Cape Canaveral, Florida. (AP)

Science

SpaceX Falcon to debut launch with Tesla Roadster payload

Monster rocket set for test flight

CAPE CANAVERAL, Florida, Feb 5, (Agencies): SpaceX's hot new monster rocket makes its launch debut this week, blasting off from the same pad that hoisted men to the moon a half-century ago.

The Falcon Heavy won't surpass NASA's Saturn V moon rocket, still all-time king of the launch circuit. It won't even approach the liftoff might of NASA's space shuttles.

But when it departs on its first test flight - as early as Tuesday - the Heavy with its three boosters and 27 engines will be the most powerful working rocket out there today, by a factor of two. Picture SpaceX's frequent-flyer Falcon 9 and its single booster and then times that by three; the Heavy's three first-stage boosters are strapped side by side.

The Heavy represents serious business for the private space company founded 16 years ago by Elon Musk. With more than 5 million pounds of liftoff thrust - equivalent to 18 747s jetliners - the Heavy will be capable of lifting supesize satellites into orbit and sending spacecraft to the moon, Mars and beyond.

Using another airplane analogy, SpaceX boasts a Heavy could lift a 737 into orbit, passengers, luggage and all.

The company already has some Heavy customers lined up, including the US Air Force.

"I can't wait to see it fly and to see it fly again and again," said the Southwest Research Institute's Alan Stern. He's the lead scientist for NASA's New Horizons spacecraft which made an unprecedented flyby of Pluto and is now headed to an even smaller, icy world on the fringes of the solar system.

Cape Canaveral hasn't seen this kind of rocket mania since the last space shuttle flight in 2011. Huge crowds are expected for the afternoon launch from Kennedy Space Center. Visitor center tickets for the best up-close viewing, called "Feel the Heat" and "Closest Package," sold out quickly.

"When you're talking about what would be the biggest and largest op-

erational launch vehicle in the world, that adds another dimension of excitement," said Phil Larson, an assistant dean at the University of Colorado at Boulder, who used to work for SpaceX and the Obama administration.

The Heavy is capable of delivering, in one fell swoop, 140,660 pounds (63,800 kgs) of cargo to low-Earth orbit, nearly 60,000 pounds (26,700 kilograms) to high-Earth orbit, 37,000 pounds (16,800 kilograms) to Mars, or 7,700 pounds (3,500 kilograms) to Pluto.

But for this inaugural flight, the rocket will carry up Musk's cherry-red Tesla Roadster. In addition to SpaceX, he runs the electric car maker Tesla.

"Red car for a red planet," Musk tweeted in December, when announcing the surprise cargo.

Fresh-off-the-drawing-board rockets typically carry steel or concrete blocks in place of true cargo.

"That seemed extremely boring," Musk explained.

Evidence

NASA officials said the Falcon Heavy is just the latest evidence of the Kennedy Space Center's transformation into a multi-user spaceport, a turnaround after decades of space shuttles taking center stage.

A variety of rockets will be needed - besides NASA's still-under-construction Space Launch System megarocket - as astronauts venture out into the solar system, said Kennedy's director of center planning and development, Tom Engler. Blue Origin, led by Amazon's Jeff Bezos, for instance, is developing a big, reusable orbital-class rocket named New Glenn after the first American to orbit the world, John Glenn.

Cocoa Beach Mayor Ben Malik, a banker by day, noted that jobs are making a big comeback, with so many private rocketeers and other aerospace businesses hitting town. The area suffered thousands of layoffs when the 30-year space shuttle program ended.

"We are not only back, but the region

is much more diversified," Malik said. "We are becoming a high-tech hub."

Stern sees the Heavy opening the door to more exploration, both human and robotic, given its heft and cost savings. SpaceX's launch failures of Falcon 1 and Falcon 9 showed the company has "a very strong backbone." While Falcon 1 was completely on the SpaceX tab, Falcon 9 benefited from the company's contracts with NASA for space station shipments.

This persistence resulted in SpaceX becoming, in 2010, the first private company to launch a spacecraft into orbit and then safely guide it back to Earth, something only large governments had accomplished. Two years later, SpaceX became the first commercial supplier of the International Space Station. Now the company is aiming for the first commercial crew launch.

At the heart of SpaceX's cost savings is its rocket-recycling campaign. Two of the Heavy's first-stage boosters are repeats, having flown on Falcon 9s. The company will attempt to recover all three boosters; the two old boosters will aim for side-by-side vertical touchdowns at Cape Canaveral, while the new, beefed-up center core will attempt to land on a floating ocean platform.

Rocket makers typically discard their leftover boosters in the ocean. Now those boosters often come back and land, at least when it's SpaceX, complete with sonic booms just like the old shuttle days.

Unlike most rockets out there, the Falcon Heavy receives no government funding. The Mars-obsessed Musk has taken it upon himself and his California-based aerospace company to bankroll the hulking rocket. At a sticker price of \$90 million, the Heavy is a relative bargain. NASA's bigger and more powerful SLS is expected to exceed \$1 billion a flight.

Musk upped the ante by putting his Tesla atop this first Heavy; he's been warning for months the rocket might not make it higher than the launch tower.



This Dec 6, 2017 photo made available by SpaceX shows a Tesla car next to the fairing of a Falcon Heavy rocket in Cape Canaveral in Florida. (AP)



Li



Timmermans

Discovery

China to make polluted land safe:

China will try to make around 90 percent of its contaminated farmland safe for crops by the end of 2020, and will also restrict development on a quarter of the country's territory, Environment Minister **Li Ganjie** said.

Li said China would conduct a detailed investigation into soil pollution and launch pilot zones that would be used to test soil pollution prevention and treatment technologies, according to an account of a weekend meeting published by the Ministry of Environmental Protection on its official website (<http://www.mep.gov.cn>).

A 2013 survey showed about 3.33 million hectares (8 million acres) of China's farmland - an area the size of Belgium - was deemed too polluted to grow crops, with estimated clean-up costs amounting to 1 trillion yuan (\$159 billion).

China declared war on pollution in 2014, trying to head off public discontent and reverse the damage done to its skies, rivers and soil by more than three decades of breakneck growth. (RTRS)

□ □ □

Greenpeace launches appeal:

Environmental groups launched an appeal on Monday after an Oslo court rejected their arguments that Norway's oil and gas exploration in the Arctic violates citizens' right to a clean environment.

Greenpeace and Nature and Youth disputed the Oslo District Court's verdict last month, particularly that Norway could not be responsible for greenhouse gas emissions from the use of its oil and gas exported abroad.

The Oslo court said a 2015 licensing round that granted offshore exploration rights to companies including Statoil, Chevron, Lukoil and ConocoPhillips was acceptable under Norway's anti-pollution laws.

"There is already enough carbon dioxide in the atmosphere to seriously damage our future," said Truls Gulowsen, head of Greenpeace Norway, in launching the appeal.

"By opening up these pristine areas for oil exploration, Norway is effectively smuggling its emissions outside of its own borders and furthering climate change, which harms everyone, everywhere," he said. (RTRS)

□ □ □

EU acts to improve water:

The Euro-

pean Union is revamping its water quality rules to address possible new health hazards and limit plastic waste by discouraging people from drinking bottled water.

The European Commission has said the

rules will oblige the bloc's 28 countries to improve access to drinking water and better inform citizens about water quality, be it from taps or bottles. It hopes the move will improve confidence in local tap water and



A police officer controls water collection at a source of natural spring water in Cape Town. (AP)

wean people off bottles, which are among the most common plastic items found on European beaches.

Tap water in Europe costs a fraction of a euro cent per liter, sharply less than bottled water. Commission Vice-President **Frans Timmermans** says "if people know what is cheaper for them and not hazardous to their health, they might make a different choice." (AP)

□ □ □

UK pushed to ban ivory sales: Britons have strongly indicated that they want to end their country's domestic ivory trade, which allows the sale of antique ivory items produced before 1947, a British official has said.

Grant Miller, who leads a border security unit targeting wildlife contraband, said Britons made it clear in a recent consultation by the government that "a domestic ivory market in the United Kingdom is no longer socially acceptable."

Miller, a senior officer in Britain's Border Force, spoke on the sidelines of a workshop in South Africa that explored ways to curb flora and fauna trafficking and was attended by southern African customs officials and several Chinese delegates. The British government wants to take steps against ivory trading that would be "some of the strongest in the world," said Miller, whose unit is based at Heathrow Airport in London. (AP)

Film

Kunhardt’s movie humanizes MLK

‘Wilderness’ an eye-opening, meticulous docu on King

By Owen Gleiberman

‘King in the Wilderness’ is a provocative title for a Martin Luther King Jr. documentary, because it creates an image so counterintuitive it’s disarming. In the twelve years he strode across the national stage — from the end of 1955, when the Montgomery Bus Boycott began, through 1968, the year he was assassinated — King was a beacon of transcendent fire and radical moral courage. That was just as true during the last 18 months of his life, the period covered by Peter Kunhardt’s eye-opening, meticulous, and haunting movie. So why, during that time, was King in the wilderness? Because the world around him had changed. The landmark events led by King during the Civil Rights era (the Bus Boycott, the 1963 “I Have a Dream” speech, the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act) were all marked, in the eyes of the nation, by a foundational clarity. But the issues that King was focusing on now, like workers’ rights, while every bit as urgent and morally driven, were less iconic. They lacked the stone-tablet majesty of the earlier battles. King, too, now faced a major dissension within his own ranks. The gospel of non-violence was a stunningly effective strategy that had allowed King, in almost any situation, to occupy the moral high ground. But by the time 1967 rolled around, a new generation of black leaders, inspired by Malcolm X (who was killed by the Nation of Islam in 1965), effectively flipped the meaning of non-violence. To defend

yourself if attacked, said Malcolm, was not only justified — it was an essential action of dignity. To Stokely Carmichael, the future Black Panther who started off, alongside King, as a leader of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), the prospect of turning the other cheek now rubbed him the wrong way. In “King in the Wilderness,” there’s an extraordinary piece of footage in which King and Carmichael are strolling side by side, leading a march in the blazing sun, and a reporter with a microphone toggles between them, asking each of them questions about this very subject, effectively moderating a debate on the issue of non-violence. King is trying to spearhead a protest, but the singularity of his philosophy is fraying around him as he speaks. Famous There’s another, quite famous piece of footage from this period, shown in the movie, in which something that sounds like a gunshot rings out, and King ducks, his eyes darting nervously. That image has the effect of outing King’s anxiety: it captures the unbearable pressure he was under. “King in the Wilderness” includes a wealth of other material that feels revelatory: home-movie clips of King looking wary and earthbound, that solemn majestic phrasing of his now sounding like a controlled cover for fear, as well as new interviews with multiple members of his inner circle (Andrew Young, Jesse Jackson, Bernard Lafayette). Racially, America had become a cauldron that was boiling over, and King was at the center of it, to the point that his non-violent

stance actually looked more extreme than ever. (It was now seen as a provocation.) What “King in the Wilderness” shows us, through close-up archival footage, is the sweat and dread King lived with every day — and probably did back in the Bus Boycott era, too. It just wasn’t made public. The movie humanizes King, in occasionally startling ways. There’s a clip of him on “The Merv Griffin Show,” speaking with a preacher’s sly smile about the night-world excitement of New York City, and Andrew Young recalls King’s rather shocking sense of humor during this era: He would improvise fake eulogies for one of his cohorts, sermonizing with that operatic gospel voice but making sure to work in scathing putdowns of whoever he was talking about. (He was also, we’re told, an ace impressionist.) Harry Belafonte speaks with candid eloquence of his deep friendship with King, and there’s a clip of King at home in Atlanta, having dinner with his kids and saying nothing to them because he’s too “hungry” — but what we see at that modest kitchen table is a haunted man, possessed by his mission to the exclusion of all else. On April 4, 1967, King delivered his seminal speech at New York’s Riverside Church condemning the war in Vietnam. His decision to come out publicly against the war, and to attack his Civil Rights ally President Johnson over it, drew the ire of most of the nation: his supporters in the Democratic Party (who, at that point, chose to stand by their president), but also, strikingly, many of his brothers in the Civil Rights struggle, who felt that he was diluting their message. (RTRS)

Variety



Saoirse Ronan attends the 2018 Santa Barbara International Film Festival Santa Barbara Award ceremony at the Arlington Theatre on Feb 4 in Santa Barbara, California. (AP)

Film

Advantages, challenges of Oscar best picture line-up

‘Darkest Hour’, ‘Dunkirk’ split the vote?

By Jenelle Riley

When the best picture nominees were announced, there were surprises on both sides. Some are disappointed that players such as “The Big Sick” and “The Florida Project” did not make the list, while others were thrilled that bubble films including “Darkest Hour” and “The Post” did. We take a look at the final nine nominees and what many perceive to be their strengths and weaknesses going into the final stretch. Call Me by Your Name Advantages: A gay love story that transcends the central couple to become universally relatable. Timothée Chalamet gives one of the best performances of the year as Elio, a teen struggling with his sexuality and with heartbreak. It is also beautifully shot in the Italian countryside and arrives at a time when the spotlight is on LGBTQ portrayals in entertainment. Challenges: The film has drawn comparisons to “Moonlight”, last year’s best picture winner, which may have the Academy looking to branch out from same-sex romances. And though it has scored many nominations, it’s been consistently beaten out by “Lady Bird” and “The Shape of Water” on the awards circuit. Darkest Hour Advantages: Driven by Gary Oldman’s performance for the ages as Winston Churchill, “Darkest Hour” is also a thrilling adventure story about a nail-biting moment in history when the world was about to fall to a tyrant and it took a brilliant, charismatic, courageous leader to rally the free world and save humanity. Challenges: Do two films about the “Dunkirk Miracle”, ie, “Darkest Hour” and “Dunkirk”, split the vote? Also, in a year when long-overdue support for diversity and female empowerment is helping power many films to awards contention and triumphs, can a brilliantly crafted, rousing celebration of the “great man” theory of history still score with voters? Dunkirk Advantages: Nominated twice before in this category, Christopher Nolan returns with a crowd pleaser that also wowed critics. An old-fashioned epic about the British retreat from Dunkirk in the early part World

War II, no one questions its visual power. Challenges: Will US voters take to a movie with few women (especially in the year of #MeToo) and minimal dialogue about an incident that took place before America entered the war? Get Out Advantages: In many ways, Jordan Peele’s social thriller is the movie of the year: a huge commercial and critical hit that has exceeded all expectations for a genre film that came out early in the year. Daniel Kaluuya’s acting nom in a tough category shows there’s support across the board for what might be the most-talked about and timely movie in the race. Challenges: It’s still a genre film and many voters might feel it was too successful. The nominations might just be the win for this movie. Lady Bird Advantages: The movie no one dislikes, and with a female lead and director, it feels timelier than ever. The support in top categories (director, screenplay, two acting noms) shows there’s a strong fanbase for Greta Gerwig’s smart, funny coming-of-age tale. Challenges: Some might feel it lacks the “Important with a Capital I”-ness of among films that tackle war, race relations, the power of the press, etc. That would be a serious shortchanging of this beautiful, perfectly modulated film. Phantom Thread Advantages: Arguably the most accessible of director Paul Thomas Anderson’s post- “There Will Be Blood” efforts, “Phantom Thread” managed to nearly equal that film’s awards tally despite working in a more enigmatic register — as well as best picture, the film amassed nominations for director, actor, supporting actress, score and costume design, indicating broader support than expected. Its distinctly European arthouse rhythms could be attractive to the classicists in the Academy’s membership, and the subtle ways it upends the patriarchal artist-muse relationship help make it an unexpectedly relevant film for the era. Challenges: The film’s six nominations came as something of a surprise on nominations morning, which could be an indication that it has a steeper mountain to climb. While Anderson has been a darling of festivals

and critics groups for years, he’s never won an Oscar, and this is only his second nomination for directing. The Post Advantages: A first-class pedigree with Spielberg, Streep and Hanks, plus a timely topic and an uplifting ending. In short, it has all the makings of an Oscar movie. Challenges: With all those makings of an Oscar movie, it might feel a bit like stacking the deck and too obvious a choice. Plus, some have complained we’ve seen similar stories before, and in more accomplished movies (see 2015’s “Spotlight”). The Shape of Water Advantages: Guillermo del Toro has made his name on crafting eerie and intricately beautiful films that subvert the traditional horror films he cut his teeth on, making the monster the hero here. The intricate set design, haunting music and gorgeous cinematography instantly draw its audience into the bleak world of Cold War America, while the powerful performances give viewers a reason to care. As the PGA winner, it appears to be the frontrunner. Challenges: While it unashamedly basks in its status as a modern fairytale, that could be its undoing. A high level of suspension of disbelief is required and some might balk at the sexual relationship between the Amphibian Man and Sally Hawkins’ Elisa. And despite great performers, there isn’t a lot of moral ambiguity between good/bad characters. Also, it missed the SAG Ensemble nomination, and no film has won best picture without it since 1995’s “Braveheart”. Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri Advantages: A critical and commercial success, Martin McDonagh’s dark comedy landed two big precursors, the Toronto Film Festival People’s Choice Award and the SAG ensemble award. The film also did well across the board, with nods for three of the actors — actors make up the biggest branch of voters who love showy roles and crackling dialogue. Challenges: In a word: Backlash. The film has come under fire for what some perceive to be the redemption of a racist cop. That snub for director Martin McDonagh doesn’t help, either, although best picture winners have overcome that in recent years (see “Argo”). (RTRS)

NEW YORK: The heir to “Titanic” is ... “Jumanji: Welcome to the Jungle”? For the first time since James Cameron’s disaster epic, a December release has topped the weekend box office in February. Seven weeks after first opening in theaters, Sony Pictures’ “Jumanji” again took the top spot at the North American box office



Peele



O'Brien

with an estimated \$11 million in ticket sales, according to studio estimates Sunday. On a sluggish Super Bowl weekend, that was good enough to surpass last week’s no. 1 film, “Maze Runner: The Death Cure”. The third installment in the YA trilogy slid 58 percent in its second week with \$10.2 million in ticket sales. (AP)

ISLAMABAD: American DJ and record producer Diplo brought his Mad Decent Block Party to Pakistan’s capital over the weekend, headlining a roster of musicians including local Pakistani acts. For two-time Grammy winner Diplo, playing Pakistan is a way to foster good relations with the mostly Muslim country after an angry Jan 1 tweet from US Presi-

dent Donald Trump complaining that Pakistan gives “terrorists” a safe haven. “I think the best way we can do any kind of diplomacy with the Pakistani people is ... basically reaching out to the kids like we do at the concerts”, Diplo told TMZ last month after the Trump tweet, which soured US-Pakistani relations.(RTRS)

People & Places



Terje Isungset (center), the founder and artistic director of the Ice Music Festival, performs with a musical instrument made purely of ice during the festival on Feb 2, in the small mountain village of Finse in the municipality of Ulvik in southern Norway. (AFP)

Music

Art and madness

Norway ice instruments ring out ‘coolest’ music

FINSE, Norway, Feb 5, (AFP): Inside a giant igloo in a snowy Norwegian village, the sound of a horn rings out, warming the mood of a freezing audience, huddled together in -24 Celsius.

But the four musicians performing are even colder: the instruments they are playing are all made of ice.

The xylophone, claves and wind instruments have been painstakingly carved from ice blocks extracted from a frozen lake, and are now part of a finger-numbing performance at the 13th Ice Music Festival in the mountain village of Finse.

The problem is, the longer the musicians play, the more the instruments start to disintegrate.

It is not an easy task “to perform on instruments that are melting while you play them,” says percussionist **Terje Isungset**, also the founder of the festival.

Wearing thick wool gloves, he blows warm air into his ice-sculpted horn, illuminated under blue and turquoise lights.

Next to him, a singer with an angelic voice covers her mouth with a scarf to stay warm, while a bass player removes his gloves so he can pull the strings on his ice-made instrument.

The setting of the festival, 195 kilometres (121 miles) west of Oslo, is not for anyone sensitive to a shivering climate.

Freezing

Held between Feb 2 and 3 inside an igloo built solely of ice, dozens of people wearing clothing fit to survive freezing mountain weather sit on snow benches while cheering and wrapping their arms around each other.

As the night grows older, a band member blows into a long ice wind instrument shaped like an Australian didgeridoo, vibrating across the venue.

“It’s a fine line between art and madness,” Emile Holba, a UK-based photographer and crew member, tells AFP as he bursts into laughter.

“Things can go wrong, instruments can break...the audience likes the purity of it,” he adds.

The festival has previously been held in Geilo, a ski resort in the central mountain region of Norway.

But organisers say the weather there has become milder, making it difficult to build ice venues and harder to prevent the instruments from melting.

“This winter... the ice was really slushy and difficult to deal with,” Isungset said.

“It’s the first time I have seen ice like this.”

In search of guaranteed freezing temperatures, the festival moved further west to Finse, a 30 minute train ride from Geilo.

Surrounded by mountains framing a glacier, the area was used to create the snow planet “Hoth” in the opening scene of Star War’s movie “The Empire Strikes Back”.

The village was also the base for Antarctic expedition training by British explorer Ernest Shackleton (1874-1922) and his Norwegian counterpart Fridtjof Nansen (1861-1930).

“It’s kind of otherworldly...there is magic there,” says Holba.

Preparing the festival is no simple task.

It took organisers a week to build the igloo and the ice needed to be sourced and collected by a crew of more than 20 people.

Large chunks were removed from a nearby lake and the musicians used chainsaws, hammers and chisels to carefully sculpt the instruments.



Isungset



Indian Bollywood actress Shilpa Shetty showcases a creation by designer Jayanti Reddy at the Lakme Fashion Week (LFW) Summer Resort 2018 in Mumbai on Feb 4. (AFP)



Lawrence



Tarantino

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Sunday’s Super Bowl offered a new look at “Red Sparrow,” the upcoming spy thriller starring **Jennifer Lawrence**.

In the clip, Lawrence’s Dominika Egorova says, “I saw something I was not supposed to. They gave me a choice: die or become a Sparrow.”

Directed by **Francis Lawrence** and featuring **Joel Edgerton**, **Matthias Schoenaerts**, **Charlotte Rampling**, **Mary-Louise Parker**, and **Jeremy Irons**, the film follows the story of Egorova, a top ballerina who suffers a career-ending injury. With she and her mother facing an uncertain future, Lawrence’s character becomes the newest recruit for Sparrow School, a secret intelligence service that trains young people to use their bodies and minds as weapons. (RTRS)

□ □ □

LOS ANGELES: Pixar’s “Coco” swept the 45th Annie Awards, winning 11 trophies at the annual ceremony honoring the year’s best in animation.

As expected, the Dia de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) tale was dominant at the An-nies, held Saturday night at UCLA’s Royce Hall in Los Angeles. In addition to best animated feature, “Coco” won for its direction (director **Lee Unkrich** and co-director **Adrian Molina**), best writing, voice acting (**Anthony Gonzalez**), music, animated effects and character animation. (AP)

□ □ □

LOS ANGELES: **Quentin Tarantino** needs to come clean about what happened on the set of “Kill Bill”. He needs to speak out, to fess up and tell us what, exactly, he was thinking. Because that could be one small yet meaningful step toward repairing what’s sick and broken in our entertain-

Film

Impressive visual effects

‘Peter Rabbit’ crafty bunny tale

By Peter Debruge

Chances are, Beatrix Potter would be flattered to know that one day, more than a century after she published “The Tale of Peter Rabbit,” her most beloved character would be reinterpreted on screen not as a traditional cartoon (even though her work paved the way for the likes of Bugs Bunny and Mickey Mouse) but as a photoreal, fully anthropomorphic rabbit, complete with opposable thumbs and a tiny blue jacket. Certainly, that much “Peter Rabbit” gets right, although Sony’s new half-digital/live-action hybrid takes entirely too many liberties with everything else.

Despite the fact she dressed her critters in human clothes and frequently painted them standing upright, Potter took great pains to capture their natural, animal-like qualities. In theory, the folks at Sony Pictures Animation (the studio behind “Stuart Little”) and Animal Logic (which brought us “Babe” and “Charlotte’s Web”) seem like the perfect stewards of that legacy. And yet, director Will Gluck (“Easy A”) and co-writer Rob Lieber thrust Peter into what feels like an elaborate Tom and Jerry cartoon, as the crafty bunny finds himself caught in an escalating arms race with the heir to Mr McGregor’s garden.

Yes, it’s impressive from a visual effects standpoint (not just virtual fur coats that seem to rustle in the wind, but the degree to which the CG critters interact with their environments, matting the grass and kicking up gravel). However, had Potter lived to see what

Hollywood has cooked up for her mischievous hero (who was sent to bed without supper in her own didactic tale), she almost certainly would have preferred for Peter (charmingly voiced by James Corden) and his three more cautious sisters — Flopsy (Margot Robbie), Mopsy (Elizabeth Debicki), and Cotton-Tail (Daisy Ridley) — to have wound up in one of Mrs. McGregor’s infamous rabbit pies.

That said, children’s entertainment being what it is today, hardly anyone will be surprised to learn that Peter now raps and uses expressions such as “chill” and “crushed it,” or that Cotton-Tail pours one out for her departed homies whenever Mr. McGregor’s name is mentioned. (Did we mention that Mr. McGregor bites it early in the first act?) As if to signal that this isn’t your grandparents’ “Peter Rabbit,” the movie kills off the long-eared trespasser’s longtime nemesis (played here by Sam Neill, virtually unrecognizable with his bulging eyes and crazy-old-man beard) just as he gets his hands on the vermin who’s been stealing his veggies.

Potter herself appears, in a manner of speaking, as Mr. McGregor’s next-door neighbor, and the Rabbit family’s closest ally, Bea (Rose Byrne). An aspiring artist and amateur naturalist, Bea spends most of her time making horrible abstract oil paintings (some kind of joke, largely miscalculated), but is also capable of creating extremely detailed old-timey watercolors (which anyone will recognize as the book’s original illustrations) — some of which spring to life to create

a few of the movie’s most charming sequences.

Quite inexplicably, Byrne’s smiley, yet simple-minded character appears to have been conceived backwards: In her art, Bea anthropomorphizes the woodland creatures that surround her home, and yet, she is the last to believe that they can really talk (or use their paws to set off detonators, for that matter). Somehow, it seems as if she should be alone in recognizing the secret lives of animals, and that the point of the movie ought to be convincing Thomas McGregor (Domhnall Gleeson), who inherits his great-uncle’s bucolic cottage, that there’s more to these creatures than meets the eye.

Variation

Instead, the movie plays like a variation on another of Potter’s stories, “The Tale of Johnny Town-Mouse,” in which two mice — one from the city, the other from the country — visit one another, only to decide that the quite prefer life where each of them was raised. After being unceremoniously discharged from the toy department of Harrods department store in London, Thomas heads to the Lake District to sell his newly inherited estate — which has since been destroyed by a rowdy rodent house party.

Drawing from Potter’s extended menagerie of characters, this peculiar set piece (a glimpse into the anarchy that might result if Peter Rabbit actually got his way) includes such unruly guests as a waistcoat-wearing badger (Tommy Brock), the snooty Pigling Bland (Ewen Leslie), and prickly Mrs. Tiggy-Winkle (Sia). (RTRS)

ment culture — and our culture, period.

In a bombshell interview with **Maureen Dowd** of The New York Times, **Uma Thurman**, who for 10 years, beginning with “Pulp

Fiction” (1994), was Tarantino’s movie-star muse, details what she went through at the hands of the predatory Miramax mogul **Harvey Weinstein**: the sexual coercion (hotel



French director Pascal Laugier (second right) and British actress Emilia Jones (second left), flanked by Canadian actress Suzanne Clement (left), and French actress Judith Chemla, hold up the award after winning the Grand Prize of the 25th Gerardmer Fantasy Film Festival for the film Ghostland on Feb 4, in Gerardmer. (AFP)

rooms, bathrobe, compliant publicists — the whole gruesome Harvey bit) intertwined with threats of career derailment, all of which she bravely resisted. But, of course, we have now heard these skin-crawling Weinstein stories many times. Thurman’s testimony, courageous and important as it is, adds up to one more horrific chapter in the saga of Harvey the unspeakable. (RTRS)

□ □ □

NEW YORK: After months of speculation that she was pregnant with her first child, **Kylie Jenner** has announced the birth of a baby girl.

In an Instagram post Sunday, Jenner says the baby was born Thursday. It’s the first child for the 20-year-old reality TV star and 25-year-old rapper **Travis Scott**.

In her post, Jenner apologizes for keeping fans “in the dark through all the assumptions”. She says she chose to keep her pregnancy private and “not to do in front of the world”.

She says pregnancy was “the most beautiful, empowering and life changing experience”.

Jenner says her daughter is healthy and beautiful. She posted a video on her app that showed her mother, **Kris Jenner**, giving birth to her and ended with a message about her own baby. It stated her daughter was born Thursday afternoon and weighed eight pounds and nine ounces. (AP)

Music

A play for values

Humor, messages at a ‘tame’ Super Bowl

NEW YORK, Feb 5, (Agencies): This year’s Super Bowl ads ran the gamut from tame humor to ... tame messages about social causes.

After a divisive year, advertisers during the Big Game worked overtime to win over audiences with messages that entertained and strove not to offend. The slapstick humor and sexual innuendo that used to be commonplace during Super Bowl ad breaks were nowhere in sight.

Instead, Budweiser, as always the largest advertiser during the game, eschewed the usual puppies and Clydesdales to showcase employees that send water to places in need. Verizon showed people thanking first responders who saved them. And Tide tried to make people laugh (and perhaps forget about its Tide Pod problem) with a humorous series of ads that starred “Stranger Things” actor David Harbour.

“This is a year where people are feeling a little frayed around the edges because the divisive political environment on both sides,” said Kelly O’Keefe, a professor at Virginia Commonwealth University’s Brandcenter. “They want to feel like there’s something still good in the world.”

While the Philadelphia Eagles bested the New England Patriots in a nailbiter on the field, advertisers were fighting a similar battle to win over the hearts and minds of viewers. It’s the largest live stage for advertising all year, so advertisers brought their A-game.

Tide took a novel approach with ads each quarter that poked fun at typical Super Bowl ads. Harbour popped up in familiar-looking ads that appear to be about different products: a car, an insurance company, jewelry and Old Spice (another P&G product). The twist? They’re really all Tide ads, because there are no stains on anyone’s clothing.

Tame comedy like the Tide ad was a theme throughout the night. In a year that saw the #MeToo movement shine a spotlight on sexual harassment, the vast majority of ads still starred men but there weren’t any that focused on scantily-clad women or sexual innuendo, save for an awkwardly dancing — and fully dressed — woman in a Diet Coke ad.

Comedian Keegan Michael-Key cut through complex jargon to put things plainly in a humorous ad for Rocket Mortgage by Quicken Loans. When a restaurant patron is confused by what a “beef-protein gluten-free pate” is, he explains: “It’s a burrito, filled with plants pretending to be meat.”

Different

An Amazon ad showcased different celebrities — including actress Rebel Wilson, actor Anthony Hopkins, singer Cardi B and chef **Gordon Ramsay** — filling in as the voice of Amazon’s Alexa voice assistant.

M&M’s featured Danny DeVito as a human M&M. And Mountain Dew and Doritos staged an epic hip-hop lip sync battle between actors Morgan Freeman and Peter Dinklage. The two synced to Missy Elliott and Busta Rhymes, respectively.

“There’s a reason so many marketers are using celebrity combined with comedy — because it breaks through the clutter, delivers the message and gets buzz,” said Aaron Shapiro, CEO of ad agency Huge.

An ad for Blacture, rapper Pras’ new media platform, was one of the few ads to make an overtly political statement. It showed an African-American man standing alone on stage with tape over his mouth and a blindfold on his eyes. “Blacture. Be celebrated. Not Tolerated,” text on the screen read. And T-Mobile’s ad showed babies and enlisted Kerry Washington for a voiceover that talked about equality.

“The (T-Mobile) message is terrific but all the way through, if you asked consumers who the ad is for, nobody would know,” said Kimberly Whittler, marketing professor at the University of Virginia.

That kind of attempt to connect brands to social causes was a big theme of the night. Charles Taylor, a marketing professor at Villanova University, said a fifth of all Super Bowl ads featured causes, compared with just 6 percent last year.

Toyota kicked things off by depicting the story of Lauren Woolstencroft, a Paralympic skier who was born missing her left arm below the elbow as well as both legs below the knees, to promote its Paralympic sponsorship.

Budweiser showcased employees from its Cartersville, Georgia, brewery as they canned water to send to places in need like Puerto Rico and California.

Hyundai showcased its donations to fight pediatric cancer by bringing real Hyundai owners into a room during the pre-game Super Bowl festivities and letting them meet cancer survivors. Hyundai donates each time someone buys one of its cars.

“There’s a lot of research that says millennials really like it when brands link themselves to causes,” said Taylor. “It’s just refreshing for a lot of people to see these unifying types of messages by the advertiser.”

But advertisers can stumble in these efforts when the connection seems tenuous. There was some negative reaction when Fiat Chrysler’s Ram trucks ad featured a speech by Martin Luther King, Jr. The commercial, timed to the 50th anniversary of the speech, showed people doing good deeds like giving out food to the needy and rescuing a boy from a fire.

“Everyone was offended,” said Zach Mann, who watched the game in Venice, California, with a group of 15 thirtysomethings. “It seems insensitive. We know it’s Black History Month, but using an American hero to sell a Dodge was off-putting.” (Ram trucks are no longer affiliated with the Dodge brand.)

Instead, it was the humorous ads like the Tide spots that won that group over.

“Everyone seems to be moving into more comedy, quirky, unique (ideas), which my friends and I all are enjoying way more” than past years, Mann said. “I think we all need more laughter these days.”

Advertisers tried to play up American values and not fumble the ball during Sunday’s Super Bowl, yet one waded into controversy by using the voice of the King.

In the biggest US television advertising event of the year, most spots featured humor, celebrities and a feel-good message, steering clear of a politically divisive environment.

A surprise came with the words of slain civil rights leader King in an ad for Dodge Ram, a unit of Fiat Chrysler Automobiles, where he is heard saying, “We recognize that he who is greatest among you shall be the servant.”

The “Built to Serve” ad drawing on a sermon by King sought to highlight community service but it sparked an outcry over the use of King’s legacy.



Justin Timberlake performs during halftime of the NFL Super Bowl 52 football game between the Philadelphia Eagles and the New England Patriots on Feb 4 in Minneapolis. (AP)



Singer Pink performs during the Super Bowl LII Pregame show at US Bank Stadium on Feb 4, in Minneapolis, Minnesota. (AFP)



Evans



Clarke

Variety

LOS ANGELES: Netflix has dropped a surprise on Super Bowl viewers — a new “Cloverfield” film will be released after Sunday’s game.

The streaming service debuted a trailer for “The Cloverfield Paradox” during Super Bowl 52. It mixed footage from the first film, a surprise hit in 2008, with clips from the new film from director **Julius Onah**.

“Cloverfield” featured a monster attacking New York through the recordings of a group of friends trying to survive the chaos. Sunday’s trailer promised viewers would “find out why” the monsters attacked. It shows a group of astronauts encountering problems with an experimental technology. (AP)

LOS ANGELES: Marvel fans had reason to rejoice during Super Bowl LII, as Disney released a new trailer for “Avengers: Infinity War” during the event.

In the clip, **Robert Downey Jr’s** Iron Man declares, “So this is it, it’s all been leading to this” alongside some of the biggest stars of the Marvel universe, including **Chris Hemsworth’s** Thor, **Tom Holland’s** Spiderman, **Chris Evans’** Captain America, **Scarlett Johansson’s** Black Widow and **Benedict Cumberbatch’s** Doctor Strange.

“Avengers: Infinity War” is a culmination of the last ten years of Marvel films, featuring **Thanos (Josh Brolin)** as the main villain after years of teasing fans with quick in-movie references to the Mad Titan and multiple appearances in previous films. (RTRS)

LOS ANGELES: The trailer for **Dwayne Johnson’s** new film “Skyscraper” looks like a bad time for the residents of the world’s tallest and most advanced building.

Set to a cover of Tom Petty’s “I Won’t Back Down,” Johnson flew through the air and shattered windows as flames roared in the background, and declared his determination to save his family, who are trapped 200 plus stories in the air.

Rotten Tomatoes teased a 17-second first look at the trailer on Twitter Thursday, telling fans of Johnson to tune in to Sunday’s big game to catch the full trailer. The clip showed Johnson telling a group of people that they had designed the building with “every single safety and security challenge” he could think of and in doing so had “trapped them 240 floors in the air.” The full trailer will air on tonight’s “The Late Show with Jimmy Fallon.” (RTRS)

Music

Pop star salutes Prince in Super Bowl halftime party

Timberlake show fails to dazzle

NEW YORK, Feb 5, (Agencies): Justin Timberlake ended his Super Bowl halftime show on Sunday with no unintentionally exposed body parts.

Still, the singer made reference to the infamous 2004 Super Bowl “wardrobe malfunction,” the incident where he raised a ruckus by yanking off part of Janet Jackson’s costume.

Timberlake played “Rock Your Body,” the same song he performed with Jackson 14 years ago.

It may have been the only thing left out of the halftime show, where Timberlake seemed intent upon involving everyone in the stadium except the Eagles and Patriots. He appeared to try every idea thrown at him in production meetings.

One may have worked well — opening his set in the bowels of the stadium in what was made to seem like a small club — if the performance hadn’t rendered his new single “Filthy” unintelligible.

Timberlake climbed steps out into the stadium, down a runway to a stage while singing “Rock Your Body.” He was constantly surrounded by dancers, enthusiastic musicians and jumping audience members, so much so that it made the star of the show seem small.

He danced on the NFL’s midfield logo, brought out a marching band dressed in tuxedos, gave audience members giant reflecting mirrors, played at a gleaming white piano, had two elaborate stage sets and even climbed into the audience to take “selfies” with a young fan.

Sitting at the piano, he performed a “duet” with the Twin Cities’ late star, Prince, whose image was projected on a giant scrim beside Timberlake. It was a touching tribute, particularly when cameras outside the stadium caught Prince’s insignia in lights, although the song choice of “I Would Die For U” felt unnecessarily macabre.

Timberlake was at his best in his

breezy hits “Sexyback” and “Can’t Stop the Feeling,” which emphasized his appeal as an adept song-and-dance man. It was why the NFL brought him back despite the history with Jackson. In fact, a backlash had grown recently among people who wondered why Jackson seems to be forever punished for the “wardrobe malfunction” while Timberlake skated by.

Perhaps that left him feeling that he had to try too hard to get back into the public’s graces.

He wasn’t the only performer at the Super Bowl. Leslie Odom Jr. performed “America the Beautiful” before the game and Pink sang “The Star Spangled Banner,” perhaps the most anticipated version of the national anthem in Super Bowl history.

Controversy

After a season where a political controversy was caused by some NFL players who protested against police brutality by kneeling during the national anthem, cameras watched to see if the Super Bowl would be used as a protest venue. But none of the players took part in any demonstration.

Pink took a throat lozenge out from her mouth before singing. She seemed to sing to a pre-recorded track, since the performance had an orchestra accompaniment and there wasn’t one on the field. Justin Timberlake danced his way through a club-inspired Super Bowl halftime show Sunday as he paid tribute to Prince in the late singer’s hometown with a towering yet tasteful projection.

After fevered speculation on whether or how Timberlake would salute the icon as the Super Bowl came to Minneapolis, the pop star obliged midway through his performance.

“Minneapolis, this is for you,” Timberlake told the crowd as he sat down to a piano, the field bathed in purple light.

As Timberlake slowed down the tempo for a soulful cover of “I Would

Die 4 U,” footage of “Purple Rain”-era Prince shot up toward the roof of the new US Bank Stadium in a smoky haze, closing with a silhouette of The Purple One with his guitar.

But Prince, who died in April 2016 of an accidental overdose, did not “perform” in a hologram — as some fans had feared — and the segment, while memorable, amounted to a fleeting moment of the up-tempo show.

While many Super Bowl performers go heavy on pyrotechnics, Timberlake instead showed off his dancing skills, opening the show in a nightclub-like maze of lasers as he sang his recent single “Filthy.”

He rose to center stage and sang “Suit and Tie” with back-up from the appropriately attired University of Minnesota marching band, who moved to the music with their instruments doubling as props.

Timberlake has described Prince as a “huge influence” on him, but his Super Bowl tribute had generated controversy even before it happened.

The celebrity gossip site TMZ earlier said that Timberlake was considering a Prince hologram, horrifying many fans.

Sheila E., one of Prince’s closest collaborators, said late Saturday that she had spoken to Timberlake who voiced “heartfelt words of respect” for The Purple One — and assured no hologram.

Prince had a famously complicated relationship with technology, with the artist among the first stars to embrace the possibilities of online music but eventually becoming disgruntled over the internet’s cultural effects.

In a 1998 interview with Guitar World, Prince said he would never want to “perform” with a dead artist such as Duke Ellington through digital effects, calling such lack of artistic control for a late musician “the most demonic thing imaginable.”

LOS ANGELES: Disney and Lucasfilm released a teaser for the upcoming tentpole “Solo: A Star Wars Story” during the Super Bowl.

Ahead of the full-length trailer being shown Monday on “Good Morning America,” Disney aired a short clip. The role of Han Solo — which has been

famously portrayed by **Harrison Ford** in previous “Star Wars” films — will be taken over by **Alden Ehrenreich**. **Donald Glover**, **Emilia Clarke**, **Woody Harrelson**, **Thandie Newton**, **Paul Bettany**, and **Joonas Suotamo** will also star in the spinoff.

The film follows the young Han Solo and Chewbacca’s adventures before joining the Rebellion, including their encounters with Lando Calrissian. (RTRS)

LOS ANGELES: Sunday’s Super Bowl offered the first look at “Mission: Impossible — Fallout,” the sixth installment in the hit spy series.

Starring **Tom Cruise**, **Rebecca Ferguson**, and **Alec Baldwin** — who will reprise their roles from previous films — “Fallout” will add **Henry Cavill**, **Angela Bassett**, **Vanessa Kirby**, and **Sian Brooke** to the cast. Directed by **Christopher McQuarrie**, the film follows Cruise’s Ethan Hunt and team as they race against time after a botched mission.

Last week, Cruise posted a photo of himself hanging off the side of a helicopter in a still from the film, promising fans, “We’ve upped the ante for the sixth #MissionImpossible. I can’t wait for you guys to see more.” “Fallout” was forced to halt production in August after Cruise sustained a serious on-set injury while performing a stunt. He broke his ankle after falling short and slamming into a wall while leaping across a building gap. (RTRS)



Leslie Odom Jr performs ‘America the Beautiful’ before the NFL Super Bowl 52 football game on Feb 4 in Minneapolis. (AP)

What's On



Photos from the event

FAIPS-DPS resuscitates Poetry Recitation

Poetry is the rhythmical creation of beauty in words. To reiterate this, 13th Interschool Choral Recitation Competition was organized by Don Bosco Past Pupils Association on Jan 26 at Don Bosco School. The recital excelled in rhythm, mood, diction and expressions. Students of FAIPS-DPS showcased their skills and secured first positions in both Junior and Senior Category and finally bagged the coveted Rolling Trophy for the 2nd consecutive year.

The competition was held to provide students the chance to cultivate an appreciation for poetry while honing their public speaking and

memorization skills. Students recited poems and they were judged on inflection, accuracy and expressions by the eminent judges Jeffrey Mcdevitt and Dr Ivan Ivandv. The momentous achievement earned the school the glittering and prestigious Rolling trophy while the students took home individual plaques and certificates.

It must be acknowledged that a huge credit goes to the English teachers for their tireless and dedicated efforts. Nothing would have been possible without the guidance and support of the Principal, Ms Anju Dhemana who always remains a beacon of inspiration.

contract bridge

By Steve Becker

Bidding quiz

You are South, both sides vulnerable. The bidding has been:

West North East South
1 ♦ Pass Pass ?

What (if anything) would you bid with each of the following five hands?

1. ♠ 853 ♥ KJ72 ♦ AJ10 ♣ K96
2. ♠ KQ9 ♥ QJ4 ♦ AQ6 ♣ K1072
3. ♠ J87 ♥ QJ954 ♦ 3 ♣ KJ86
4. ♠ J64 ♥ AK9 ♦ KQ9874 ♣ 10
5. ♠ AJ8 ♥ AKJ96 ♦ 52 ♣ KQ7

1. One notrump. When the bidding is on the verge of dying out at a low level, you are permitted to make bids you would not make in any other position. Such bids in the so-called balancing seat often don't have their normal meaning.

The player in the balancing seat has an obligation not to sell out cheaply if there is a reasonable way to compete for the contract. If he does elect to compete, whatever action he takes must tentatively be regarded as suspect.

The one-notrump bid in this sequence typically indicates about 11 to 14 points rather than the 15 to 18 you would be expected to hold if you bid one notrump directly over the opening bidder.

2. Double. If you were in second position, you would overcall with one notrump, but in the balancing seat you are much too strong for that

action. Partner would think you had a much flimsier hand, such as in the first problem.

The way to show real opening notrump values in the balancing position is to double and then bid notrump at your next turn to complete the description of your hand.

3. One heart. This isn't much of a hand, but it is better to bid than to pass. Partner probably has 10 or more points, which gives your side a shot at a partscore that would be lost if you threw in the sponge prematurely. Because you are in the balancing seat, partner should not become overly enthusiastic about your bid.

4. Pass. The opponents couldn't be in a worse spot, and it's not wise to help them out by competing. West will probably go down a trick or two, and you may wind up with a respectable plus. Besides, partner probably doesn't have much, since he's marked with diamond shortness and failed to bid over one diamond.

5. Double. Here you have values with which you would act in any position, and these can best be shown by doubling and then bidding hearts. An immediate jump to two hearts in the balancing seat would suggest a strong hand interested only in hearts, but this hand may well play better in notrump, spades or clubs, depending on partner's hand.

Tomorrow: Like a hole in the head.

click

Drinking problem?: Friends of Bill W. are available to help. Totally confidential. Email: rohsecretary@gmail.com

Narcotics Anonymous: NA can help with addiction problems. Totally confidential: 94087800 English/Arabic.

Cancer online support group: If you are Cancer patient or family member fighting with this deadly disease, come join our online support group. Best way of dealing with this disease is providing support and share our experience with each other. There are lot of things which even doctors can't tell so be member of this website and start sharing your experiences which may help others. October is recognized as National Breast Cancer Awareness Month (NBCAM). The primary purpose is to promote self examination and screening mammography as the most effective way to save lives by detecting breast cancer at early stage. For more information visit: <http://fightingwithcancer.webs.com/>

Latest

Feb 7

TIES Third Culture Kids: If you or someone you know has spent a significant part of his developmental years outside his parent's culture, or if his parents are from two different cultures, he is a Third Culture Kid. Join Dr Teresa Leshner to explore some of the advantages and disadvantages of being a TCK and strategies for coping with its challenges. Discussion follows a 30-minute presentation on

Wednesday, February 7 @ 7pm
Villa No 67, Street 413, Block 4, Shuhada Area, Kuwait
Phone: +(965) 25231015
Email: info@tiescenter.net

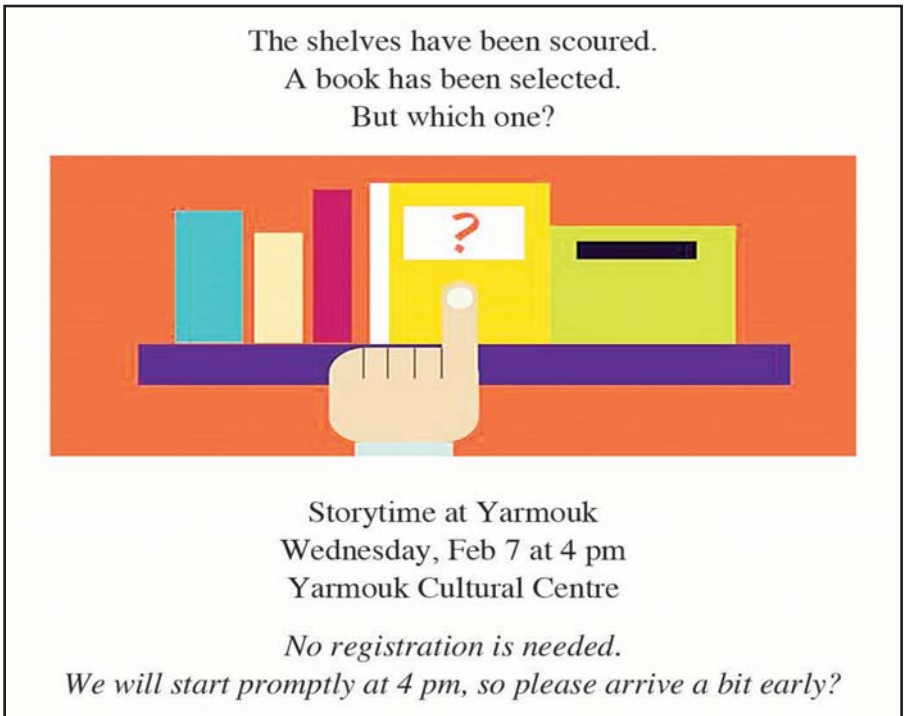
TIES Chai Dhuha: Experience a Kuwaiti tradition with a cup of tea (chai) in early morning (dhuha). Feel at home among Kuwaiti ladies and seasoned expats while sharing what's on your mind.

Wednesday, February 7 @ 10am (ladies only)
Villa No 67, Street 413, Block 4, Shuhada Area, Kuwait
Phone: +(965) 25231015
Email: info@tiescenter.net

World Schools Debating: The trials to select the National Schools' Debating Team which will represent Kuwait at the World Schools' Debating Championships in Croatia in July 2018 will take



A flyer of the event



A flyer of the event



"BOY, THERE'S A WHOLE LOT OF 'CAT PEOPLE' THAT OWN STORES."

place from 15:30-19:30 on Wednesday, Feb 7 at the British School of Kuwait. Open to all students in Kuwait aged 14-18.

To register your interest and to receive further details please contact Richard Boyle at q8debates@gmail.com.

Feb 9

IEI Kuwait — Family Day: Institution of Engineers (India), Kuwait Chapter is pleased to inform you all that we are celebrating the Family Day-2018 on Friday, Feb 9, 2018 at Wafra Farm. This Family Day celebration will be filled with fun and lot of games, talent show, bonfire etc, from 10 am to 6 pm and attractive prizes will be distributed to the winners of the each games and events.

It is the day filled with full of fun and enjoyment for the members, spouse, kids, friends and guests.

IEI Kuwait Chapter Members are requested to confirm their participation by registering through www.ieikuwait.org website by clicking Event At-

Continued on Page 24

NEW YORK TIMES CROSSWORD

Note: Two letters of the alphabet are missing from the main, connected portion of the completed grid. What are they? The answer goes, appropriately, at 35-Across.

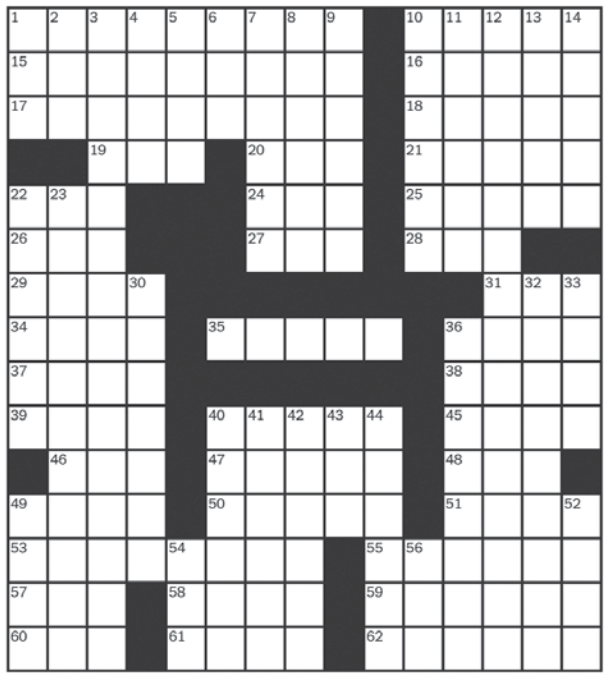
- ACROSS**
- 1 Fair
 - 10 Hale ____, House majority leader of the 1970s
 - 15 Regal Entertainment Group facility
 - 16 "Get ____, you two!"
 - 17 Hierarchical structure, metaphorically
 - 18 "Fighting man from head to toe"
 - 19 Cave-____ (mining hazards)
 - 20 What naphthalene is distilled from
 - 21 Mild cheese
 - 22 Where some bills originate, for short
 - 24 Letters on a cartoon stick
 - 25 First name in "wabbit" hunting
 - 26 Org. with millions of members HQ'd in Fairfax, Va.
 - 27 Consumes too much, informally
 - 28 Agent, for short two!
 - 29 Historical ____
 - 31 Stock opportunity, in brief
 - 34 Well-planned
 - 35 Likely contents of a 44-Down
 - 36 Nibble (on)
 - 37 Connector of English stories
 - 39 No Triple Crown winner ever
 - 40 Exhaust
 - 45 Comparison word
 - 46 Enliven, with "up"
 - 47 Kind of scheme
 - 48 Shaver's option
 - 49 Word repeated in "What's ____ is ____"
 - 50 "Eat up!"
 - 51 Bullring shouts
 - 53 Light brown brew
 - 55 Hard, pungent cheese
 - 57 Melania Trump ____ Knauss
 - 58 "Hooked on Classics" label
 - 59 Some toy trucks
 - 60 Lao-____
 - 61 Library references, briefly
 - 62 San ____, Tex.

ANSWER TO PREVIOUS PUZZLE

WATT FLAPS STAN
ELOI SERGE WACO
LOWE TOTAL EXAM
TUNDRA AFLCIO
CYPRESSHILL
HAREM MAA GUIL
ERIS BORNE PNIN
ACE MATADOR IED
THREERINGCIRCUS
TRIO REDO
ANC UNION KER
DNA EMANUEL SOW
EDGER LDS ASSAI
GRIFT LIE TWERP
SENSE YES HESSE

DOWN

- 1 Defib user
- 2 Where: Lat.
- 3 Widely played sport developed at Amherst College in the 1960s
- 4 Cross-country route, informally
- 5 Popular beige work boots, colloquially
- 6 Silicon Valley product
- 7 Trashed



PUZZLE BY JOE KROZEL

- 8 University founder ____ Stanford
- 9 Wields
- 10 Supermarket assistant
- 11 Brooks Robinson was one
- 12 "Take a hike!"
- 13 "Johnny B. ____" (Chuck Berry hit)
- 14 Lipstick problem
- 22 New Hampshire's Saint ____ College
- 23 Home version of "Jeopardy!" and others
- 30 Agreement
- 32 Law office worker
- 33 Actor Wilson
- 36 "Move it!"
- 40 Software vendor's recommendation
- 41 In need of laundering
- 42 Marx collaborator
- 43 Israeli gun
- 44 Party item depicted in the middle of this puzzle's grid
- 49 What dogs do in lieu of sweating
- 52 Middlin'
- 54 Old-time film studio
- 56 Royal wish, once

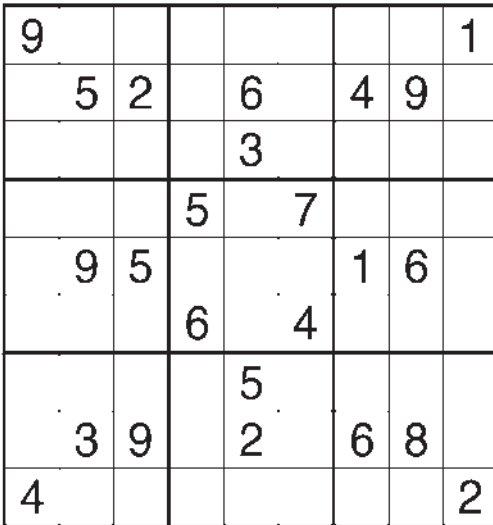


Scratch pad

Conceptis Sudoku

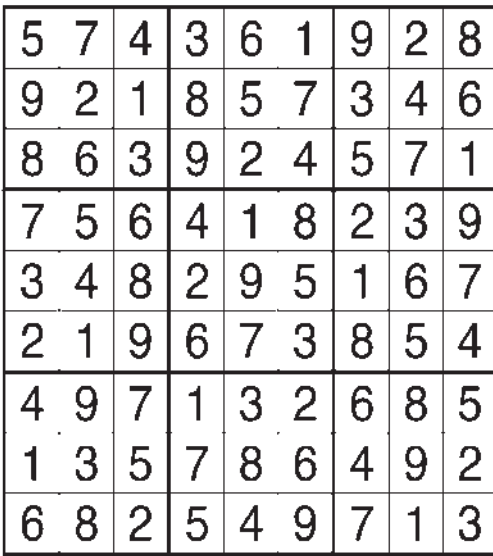
The grid must be so completed that every row, column and 3x3 box has every digit from 1 to 9 inclusive

By Dave Green



Difficulty Level ★★★★★

Answer to yesterday's puzzle



Difficulty Level ★★★

Challenger

DIRECTIONS:

Fill each square with a number, one through nine. ■ Horizontal squares should add to totals on right. ■ Vertical squares should add to totals on bottom. ■ Diagonal squares through center should add to total in upper and lower right.

THERE MAY BE MORE THAN ONE SOLUTION.

Today's Challenge
Time 2 Minutes
59 Seconds
Your Working Time ____ Minutes ____ Seconds

				35
		8		34
	8			34
			9	34
8				34
34	34	34	34	33

Yesterday's solution					7
1	2	1	2	6	
1	3	2	4	10	
1	2	1	2	6	
1	1	2	2	6	
4	8	6	10	7	

Word by Word

Union (إتحاد) Ettihad

Union is strength. Al ettihad qowah.

Numbers

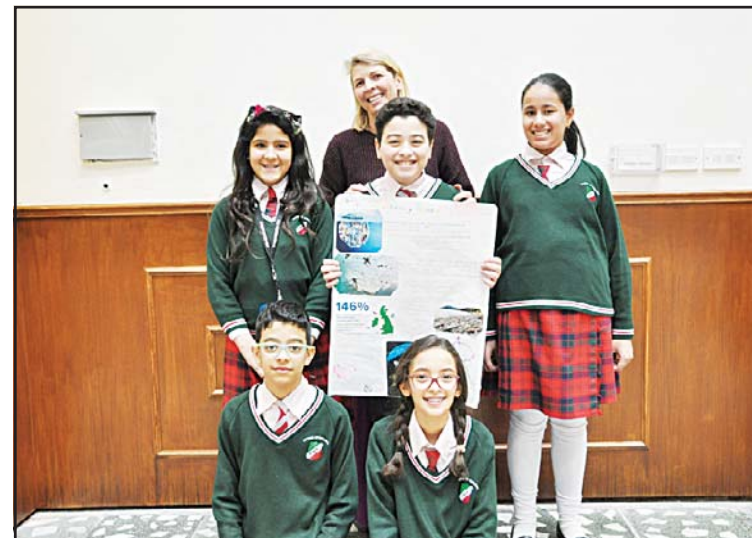
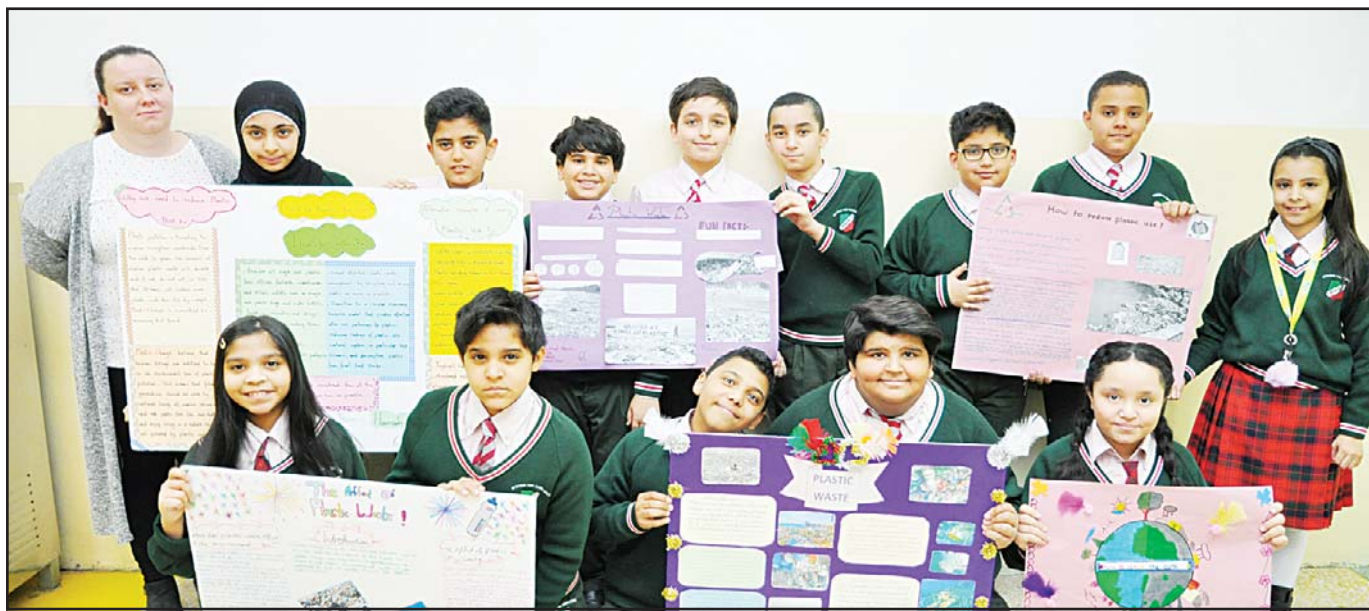
الإتحاد قوة

7780

Seven thousand seven hundred eighty

٧٧٨٠

Sabat alaf wa sabou maaha wa thamanoon



Photos from the event

Students showcase projects on 'reduced plastic use'

KNES holds 2018 Annual Science and Technology Fair

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Kuwait National English School, Hawally, celebrated its best ever 2018 Annual Science and Technology Fair on Jan 31, 2018 in the newly-renovated Al Farabi Theatre. The theme of the event was "Reduced Plastic Use".

Plastic is a material that lasts forever, yet 33 percent of all plastics are used just once and thrown away. Only 9% of all plastics are recycled and surprisingly straws cannot be recycled due to their small size and lack of a resin code. Environmental problems caused by plastics is huge and in many countries governments are taking actions.

At Kuwait National English School, high-profile campaigns to cut down on plastics have led to a surge in our pupils awareness of the damage caused by single-use plastics and the worldwide environmental concern has also been discussed and debated. Some easy ways to reduce plastic waste in our every day life are: Stop using plastic straws, use a reusable produce bag, give up chewing gum, buy products in boxes instead of bottles, using a reusable bottle or mug for beverages, use matches instead of disposable plastic lighters, avoid excessive food packaging and cut down on disposable cutlery. Our students have noticed how just a few small changes in our habits can have a big impact on the amount of plastic we use on a day-to-day basis.

The event started by a full school assembly during which Madame Chantal Al Gharabally, School Director, addressed the student body and stressed the importance of Science and Technology to the

able plastic lighters, avoid excessive food packaging and cut down on disposable cutlery. Our students have noticed how just a few small changes in our habits can have a big impact on the amount of plastic we use on a day-to-day basis.

young generation. Her speech was centered on philosophical thoughts towards ethics in science through various examples and simple hints about how to reduce plastic use. Additionally, Madame commented on the importance of Research in Science and Technology to enthuse students to think about the advantages of a science oriented career and scientific research.

The format of the Science and Technology fair was altered this

year to enable more active participation from each student. Each year group began with PowerPoint presentations on Reduce Plastic use by students using the updated school facilities and they were judged by a panel of experienced teachers. They were very interesting and informative. This was followed with Science Projects presented on A1 Posters with various teams of students made from each year group. Students from each year group were competing among themselves to show their understanding about how to reduce plastic use in Kuwait. At the end of the day, winners were rewarded with prizes and medals.

The winners for the Annual Science and Technology Fair 2018 were:

Projects & Posters winners:

Year 6A: Nebal Rabie, Nour Anwar, Sherif Muhanna, Jana Mowafy & Hashim Al Gharabally.

Year 6B: Moaaz Hassan, Meshari Al Shammari, Andrew Khaila, Bader Al Enezi & Omar Khamis.

Year 6C: Hamzah Abdel Khader, Shahad Awad, Fahad Al Shammari & Helyn Shafiei Ghanavati.

Year 7 overall winner — 7A won

out of All the Year 7. Year 7A Winners: Mariam Eslam El Rahawan, Lujain Alaedin Al Alami, Dala Salah Marafi & Jana Yousef.

Year 8 overall winner: 8C won out of all the Year 8. Year 8C winners: Jassem Abul, Mohamed Sadik, Fares Dashti, Bader Al Hubaishi & Mehdi Gholam Masjedi.

Year 9 overall winner: 9A won out of all the Year 9. Year 9A winners: Habiba Shahin, Malak Tahon, Dana Al Kandari, Nour Anwar, Ali Jamal and Lynn Halwani.

Outstanding Power Point presentation winners:

Year 6 winner: 6C was the overall winner. Year 6c winners are: Marwan Zarzora, Merah Al Khatib, Sarah Khodabocus & Faisal Al Rashid.

Year 7 winner: 7B was the overall winner. Year 7B winners are: Basheer Bashar Daboul, Arwa Shehab, Salman Murad & Omar M. Eraky.

Year 8 winner: 8C was the overall winner. Year 8C winners are: Khaled Saad, Essa Aboud, Fahad Al Enezi, Dherar Al Ali and Abdulaziz Al Koomany.

Year 9 winner: 9A was the overall winner. Year 9A winners

are: Huda A. Al Wazzan, Batool T. Hasan and Barak M. Al Manea.

The Kuwait National English School Science fair was an excellent event that showcased the successes of our students. The school has invested extensively in Science and Technology over the last few years and this event is very encouraging to see this realized in the enthusiasm and achievement of the Primary and Secondary Departments.

Madame Chantal Al Gharabally, School Director, and the team of Science & Technology teachers from the entire school have been holding the event each year since 1998 as a way to develop students' skills and interest in the subjects of Science and Technology. This interest is obviously building as each year students seem to get an earlier start on their Projects and researches in order to know everything they can about their science topic before the fair begin.

The Students Council commented that the event was extremely enjoyable and during which students were made aware of the problems associated with the use of plastic and its danger to our environment.



A photo from the event

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This week we will travel to

Canada



17. London

You'll see double-decker buses and even the River Thames, but while London, Ontario, has clearly been inspired by its British namesake, this is a distinctly Canadian destination. Attractions like Fanshawe Pioneer Village, Banting House and Eldon House will captivate history buffs. Or indulge your, shall we say, slightly less cerebral side with a tour of the Labatt Brewery.

18. Hamilton

The next time you're driving to Toronto or Niagara Falls, stop in Hamilton, where tourist traffic isn't quite so rampant. The



Niagara Escarpment provides spectacular scenery, with beautiful trails and waterfalls. Visit nearby farms, orchards and vineyards, or plan your trip to coincide with Hamilton's lively fall fairs.

19. Halifax

Travelers say Halifax is best seen on foot, so park the car and start walking. Immerse yourself in Halifax's rich history at the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic, and be sure to survey the city from the 18th-century Citadel National Historic Site. Then walk into any of Halifax's great bars and restaurants and catch some live music to round out your day.

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a blessed hospitality

New app to revolutionize remittance industry in Kuwait

Al Mulla Exchange unveils new website, online portal and app

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Always the trendsetter, Al Mulla Exchange has unleashed yet another array of enhanced product offerings. The new website of Al Mulla Exchange offers a renewed and fresh customer experience showcasing the entire website as a one page format giving the customer a seamless outlook and easy scroll. To provide consistency across all the digital platforms, the highly successful online portal of Al Mulla Exchange will also be accessed

through the Al Mulla Exchange website. The online portal now boasts of a very sleek and excellent customer interface with very easy navigation across the pages.

Also unveiled was the first remittance application in Kuwait. The remittance Application which complements the online portal provides a very immersive and intuitive experience. The application aptly named Al Mulla Exchange application can be now downloaded from the Google

Play store and will be soon available on the App Store as well.

Speaking during the launch Praveen Singh, Divisional General Manager, Al Mulla Exchange said "Digital platforms form a critical portion of our everyday life. Be it on social media, professional networking or search, we are all online. With the customer in mind we have gone ahead and revamped our website and online portal to offer a better customer experience in every way possible. So now

be it browsing our website to know more about us and our product or services, you will find the overall look and feel very enriching. Adding to that our online portal now showcases one of the best transactional experiences when it comes to sending money. Seeing is believing and I would request everyone to please try for themselves."

"Our bouquet of services have now expanded with the introduction of the Al Mulla Exchange remittance. This

will be the smarter way to send money with capability of remittances being sent on the Go. With this facility Al Mulla Exchange has fulfilled the long cherished wish of customers to have an app to send their transfers. We are continuously modifying and recalibrating our services and we look forward to customer's feedback to improve even better"

In addition to the above list of services, Al Mulla Exchange has one of the largest retail networks in

Kuwait with 76 branches. With their aim of reaching out and being closer to customers, Al Mulla Exchange will be opening more branches in the future as well. They also have a robust loyalty points system, free insurance coverage as well as free events that are conducted for all communities. With their wide reach and differentiated product & service offerings Al Mulla Exchange continues to grow exponentially in the remittance space.

New exquisite smartphone with personalized photography functions

Huawei launches P smart in Kuwait



A photo from the event

Bank promotes health-conscious society

KIB renews its strategic partnership with Al-Sidra

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: In conjunction with Gulf Cancer Awareness Week, Kuwait International Bank (KIB) recently renewed its support and sponsorship of Al-Sidra Association for the Psychological Care of Cancer Patients, with an official partnership signing that took place at Kuwait Towers. This marks the third consecutive year that the Bank has served as a strategic partner and sponsor of the Association.

Considered a safe haven for those struggling with the disease, Al-Sidra provides comprehensive healthcare services for cancer patients, across all stages of the disease. Additionally, Al-Sidra plays an active role in improving the psychological well-being of patients.

On this occasion, Manager of the Corporate Communications Unit at KIB, Nawaf Najia, said: "Our sponsorship of Al-Sidra's activities falls under the scope of our comprehensive social responsibility strategy, which reflects KIB's ongoing efforts to sponsor health-related programs and initiatives, as well as support a number of different community-based organizations. Through these various activities, we hope to promote a more health-conscious society, in addition to playing an active role in developing the local healthcare sector."

Furthermore, Najia lauded the remarkable efforts made by the team at Al-Sidra, headed by Sheikh Azza Jaber Al-Ali Al-Sabah. He noted that KIB is always keen on supporting Al-Sidra's goals and helping it carry out its mission, as the Association continues to create a positive environment for cancer patients to help them better adapt to their conditions and better deal with any related side effects. Ultimately, Al-Sidra strives to enhance patients' responses to treatment through a program of educational initiatives and therapy sessions, both individual and group, provided by its network of mental health professionals.

As a key part of its social responsibility philosophy, KIB has always strongly believed in the importance of health awareness as the driving force for the development and advancement of modern society. Accordingly, the Bank is



A photo from the event.

Burgan Bank concludes KES's Green Unit Bazaar sponsorship

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Striving to enrich society by supporting activities that provide added-value to all segments, Burgan Bank recently concluded its sponsorship of the "Green Unit Bazaar", which took place at the Kuwait English School (KES) for the second consecutive year. An annual non-profit event run by the "Green Unit Department" at KES, which aims to advance the skills and talents of students with disabilities.

The "Green Unit Department" caters to 125 students with special educational needs, aged 6 to 21, offering them a healthy, safe and holistic educational environment in line with the school's objective to inspire, challenge and encourage newer and fulfilling experiences. Every year, it hosts the coveted Green Unit Bazaar to help

raise awareness and funds for students with special needs.

The Bazaar was an open day for all family members with plentiful children's interactive activities ranging from games, face painting, photo booths, henna painting, story reading surrounded by a variety of food, clothes and gadgets stalls. Children also had the opportunity to purchase educational toys, books, pieces of art, and jewelry. The money raised during the event will all be invested to provide an effective learning environment for students with special educational needs.

Burgan Bank's support of this initiative falls under its recently launched full-fledged community program entitled 'ENGAGE' – Together to be the change.

keen on sponsoring health awareness campaigns, particularly those which target cancer patients, as these campaigns

act as key factors in combating the disease, and play an integral role in early detection of disease.

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Huawei has introduced the all new P smart with FullView display and exceptional features for consumers' everyday use. Huawei P smart continues the design language of the sought-after P Series characterized by simplicity and elegance — a slim metallic body, flat smooth rear surface, with striking aesthetics.

HUAWEI P smart's FullView display brings an immersive viewing experience, while the enhanced camera qualities provide advanced bokeh effects and unique photography functions, such as the beauty camera and gesture shot. The smartphone also introduces four intelligent sensing functions—facial recognition, gender recognition t, 10-level skin improvement and automatic perception that lets you perfectly capture unforgettable photos and flawless selfies.

Compact

The P smart skillfully hides three antennas in the upper and lower parts of the metallic body to avoid the traditional three-section design's impact on body aesthetics while ensuring seamless communication experience. With an ingenious architecture and a beautiful body with 2.5D curvy screen design, HUAWEI P smart feels even more compact and comfortable in hand. HUAWEI P smart also features a unique One-touch Split-screen mode supporting the simultaneous running of two apps offering you even more possibilities of mobile operations

Combining 13MP + 2MP rear dual cameras and 16-level dual shot blurring, Huawei P smart makes your photos impressive and stereoscopic. Further, with high-precision camera sensors, high-density phase detection pixels, the 13Mp HD camera focuses on real time, accuracy and speed, thus accurately capturing exciting moments. In order to improve photography at night, HUAWEI P smart features five groups of precision lenses, bringing cleaner, purer photos in low light.

Huawei P smart also includes the new EMUI 8.0 operating system (OS) (based on Android 8.0), taking usability to new levels for fast and intuitive feature use. P smart features Kirin 659 processor made with a process for mid-range and high-end chips characterized by better energy performance. EMUI 8.0 uses the latest enhanced file processing system that reduces and cleans system fragmentation quietly while reducing file fragmentation, allowing your smartphone to run faster and more smoothly.

Alarm

HUAWEI P smart Series is equipped with Fingerprint 4.0 solution, fingerprint recognition within 0.3 seconds bringing an enhanced user experience. Huawei has also combined fingerprint recognition with other functions to develop groundbreaking apps such as fingerprint navigation, fingerprint shot and alarm clock deactivation with fingerprint, realizing a faster, more intelligent user experience from Huawei P smart.

Additionally, with HUAWEI's artificial intelligence (AI) technology, HUAWEI P smart offers more high-quality, convenient scenario experiences, such as One-touch Split-screen, Phone Clone, Huawei Share and Dual Bluetooth Connections.

In order to enhance the battery life of smartphones with a full view, HUAWEI P smart features a 3,000-mAh battery in combination with the Intelligent Power-saving technology 6.0, which supports background real-time detection of power-hungry apps, comprehensive power consumption test and one-key optimization to save power significantly and help extend battery life greatly.

The Huawei P smart 32 GB is available for purchase in Black, Blue and Gold Colors at a price of KWD 63.900.



Huawei P Smart phone



A photo from the event

160 students participate

Landmark Group 'unveils' winners of 'Art Olympiad X'

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Landmark Group awarded the artistic talents of eight students at the tenth Art Olympiad held this year. The event saw the participation of 160 students from 16 schools of repute across Kuwait. The atmosphere was abuzz with excitement as the names of winners were announced. The Art Olympiad which recognizes the outstanding creative talents of students got an overwhelming response.

The paintings were judged by Walid Kanafani, President — IAA Kuwait Chapter and General Manager, Wavemaker Kuwait and Zeina Mokaddam, Managing Director at PH7 Group. A total of eight winners were selected at the end of the Olympiad on the basis of creativity, workmanship, overall impression and relevance to the Theme. The paintings of the young talented artists offered the judges to choose the best of the best. There were also two special prizes, one for the most colorful painting which was won by Liya Ance George (9-11 years) — Fahaeel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School and the most creative painting won by Sarah Hussien Al Mutairy (12-14 years)- Canadian Bilingual School.

Competition

This year's competition themes which the students could select from were: Dream City, Cartoon Character, Children at play etc, for the 9-11 years category. For the 12-14 years category it was Future Kuwait, draw your dream Home, A place you want to go etc. All themes brought out the unique talents and skills of the participants.

The winners of the 9-11 years category were

■ First Prize: Aileen Seo — International British School

■ Second Prize: Mridula Palliserry Ravindran — Indian Educational School

■ Third Prize: Leon Marian Prasad — Carmel School

The winners of the 12-14 years category were

■ First Prize: Minjae Son — Kuwait English School

■ Second Prize: Hala Hassanein — Kuwait English School

■ Third Prize: Reeda Shimaz Huda — Fahaeel Al-Watanieh Indian Private School

Landmark Group organized the event for the tenth consecutive year, as it falls in line with the company's corporate social responsibility strategy to uplift the capabilities and skills of youth in Kuwait. The event is seen as a grooming platform for these students

by helping them improvise their flair and encourage their innovative ability through art.

Saibal Basu, Chief Operating Officer of Landmark Group Kuwait said, "My heartfelt congratulations to the winners, I would also like to acknowledge the efforts of the rest of the talented students who participated in this competition. Their talent is a reflection of their hard work and artist vision which impress us with their outlook towards things around them. Once again, we are proud and excited to hold the competition year after year and are continually amazed by the ability our young students have. Every year the Olympiad proves to be a great accomplishment; it only gets bigger and better."

Artworks

"We are really pleased with the winning artworks and we think that they look absolutely brilliant. I would like to thank our esteemed judges Walid Kanafani, President — IAA Kuwait Chapter and General Manager, Wavemaker Kuwait and Ms Zeina Mokaddam, Managing Director at PH7 Group who has helped make this event bigger and better. Last but not the least I thank the teachers for their efforts and for encouraging such talents. With such an overwhelming response we are definitely looking forward to preparing for the Eleventh Art Olympiad next year."

The participating schools for this year's Olympiad were: The English School Salmiya, Fahaeel Al Watanieh Indian Private School, Indian Educational School, Indian Learners Own Academy, Canadian Bilingual School, Indian English Academy School, Indian Central School, Al-Nibras International Bilingual School, The English School Fahaeel, Kuwait English School, Carmel School, British School of Kuwait, Dasman Bilingual School, Kuwait National English School, International British School, American Creativity Academy — Salmiya Girls Campus.

Landmark Group is always keen on maintaining an excellent rapport and creating awareness about relevant issues among the youth with constant activities and events. Children were provided with a craft pack that included a drawing sheet and a variety of art materials such as paints, pencils and crayons.

The winners received a prize, certificates and trophies. The schools were given a plaque of appreciation. All students who participated in the Olympiad were provided with gifts and participating certificates.

Winner to receive KD 250,000

Kuwaiti Salary Account draw on Feb 8

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Gulf Bank is pleased to announce it will be holding its Kuwaiti Salary Account draw on Thursday, Feb 8, 2018, where the lucky winner of its big KD 250,000 cash prize will be announced. The Bank is happy to be holding this event at The Scientific Center located in Salmiya, Kuwait's premier science and educational organization.

The event kicks off at 5:00 pm with fun activities and programs, with a great lineup of children's activities. There will be a performance by Fahed Al Salem, who will be singing a medley of Kuwait songs new and old, accompanied by Mohamad Al Sarraf of The Concert. Gulf Bank will be represented by MCs — Mijren Al Mijren and Nawaf Al Jazzaif from Corporate Communications; In addition to Ahmad Al Matari, from Human Resources.

The Bank will also be holding its always popular 'Catch the Cash' money box game, which offer the audience a chance to win cash prizes on the spot. The actual draw will take place at 7:00 pm, and the lucky winner's name will be unveiled on the



spot and live on 88.8 FM Kuwait Pulse radio station.

Gulf Bank's salary account is tailored for Kuwaiti customers, and allows them to benefit from many unique offers by transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank, including the opportunity to either receive a KD 100 cash gift upon transferring their salaries to Gulf Bank or an interest free loan. Customers must have a minimum salary of KD 500 and are fully eligible for the offer following their first salary transfer to Gulf Bank. Additionally, customers can also enjoy a one year free of charge Visa or MasterCard credit card, as well as a chance to apply for loan up to KD 70,000, or a consumer loan up to KD 15,000.

To find out more about Gulf Bank's salary account, customers can visit one of the Gulf Bank's 57 branches; call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805, or log on to the bank's website www.e-gulfbank.com.

PBTeen launches Spring 2018 collection

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Home Furnishings brand, Pottery Barn Teen launched their latest Spring 2018 collection with an emphasis on safety, stability, longevity and space, offering you the chance to make the smallest bedroom feel bigger with the right choice of products.

Dominated by the colour Blush Crush, the PBTeen Spring 2018 Collection launched a variety of home furnishing products that perfectly blend with black, gray and everything in between. You can add gold and faux-fur for a glamorous look, or keep it simple and choose a modern print.

The PBTeen Spring 2018 collection features the Avalon Channel Stitch Bed, elevating the style of a bedroom. The tufted-detailed headboard and copper legs add sophistication and elegance to your dream space.

The Beadboard bed with its headboard details makes it a classic and timeless design that works with any decor. It is crafted with a quality kiln-dried solid wood frame to ensure this product lasts a lifetime and also has a coordinating trundle, which is perfect



for sleepovers.

Another unique item is the Hang-A-Round Chair designed with foldable legs and a velvet pleated seat, perfect for watching movies, lounging or studying.

The collection of Duvet covers in the new collection are inspired by a vibrant sunset. Colorful duvet covers and pillowcases bring a dose of style to your sleeping space. Made with pure organic cotton, they add warmth and comfort for a good night's sleep. The duvets covers are also Oeko-Tex® Certified to be both safe and

chemical-free.

The Bluebell Rose TENCEL® Duvet Cover + pillowcase brings southern belle charm to the sleeping space with a floral-inspired beautiful blue magnolia print duvet cover and pillowcase.

The Pottery Barn Teen Spring 2018 collection features an exclusive collaboration with celebrity stylists and fashion designers Emily Current and Meritt Elliott. The collection captures their classic and rebellious aesthetic in sparkling and glamorous jewellery boxes with shining gold over a natural background. The jewellery boxes are lidded and organised to keep jewellery safely in place. This exclusive collection also features a bold desk and vanity in a rich gold colour, detailed with beautifully curved drawers and legs. Throws in bold designs and monochromes are available in black and white, blush stripes, and gold stripes, boasting playful tassels on each corner of your house.

The Spring 2018 Collection is available across Pottery Barn Teen stores in Kuwait, 1st Avenue — The Avenues.

What's On

PET PALACE

Look out for the Arab Times series, the Pet Palace, and read about how people and their animals enrich each other's lives.

The Palace welcomes submissions by our readers. If you'd like to tell the world about your pet, send us a photograph and accompanying article for publication.
— Editor



In this file photo, made available by Discovery Communications, is a rescue dog named Ben, who played in the Puppy Bowl XIV on Feb 4. (AP)

APOLLO, Pa, Feb 5, (Agencies): A family has been reunited with its dog 10 years after the dog went missing.

Debra Suiverveld and her family assumed their dog Abby had died after she ran away in 2008 from their home in Apollo, but decade-old sadness turned to joy on Saturday when Suiverveld received word someone had found the dog.

The black Labrador mix showed up on George Speiring's front porch in Lower Burrell, 10 miles (16 kilometers) west of Apollo. Speiring contacted Animal Protectors of Allegheny Valley, which discovered the dog's microchip and was able to contact Suiverveld.

Someone had taken good care of Abby over the years. Abby is in great health and remembers things the family taught her, Suiverveld said.

"She would lie on the floor and cross her paws, and she remembers my daughter's commands, and she remembers the commands I taught her," Suiverveld told KDKA-TV.

Suiverveld called her 22-year-old daughter, who is a student at Miami University,

in Oxford, Ohio, to share the news.

"She cried," Suiverveld told the Tribune-Review.

Suiverveld's family has planned a reunion dinner on Sunday to welcome Abby back.

"It feels like a part of my kids' childhood is back, part of our family is back," Suiverveld said. "It's pretty awesome."

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In a city that likes to dress up its dogs, 50 dachshunds gathered in Hong Kong last Saturday wearing everything from patterned winter jumpers to dapper tweed.

It was Hong Kong's first "sausage walk", emulating popular mass dachshund get-togethers in Britain.

The band of excitable dogs and their owners carved a path through the heart of the city on a chilly morning, taking in footbridges, seafood markets and roadside temples en route.

Organiser Mat Gallagher said he had been inspired to get owners and dogs together after adopting 10-year-old rescue dachshund Jai Jai six months ago.

"They're very cool dogs, very chilled

out. He's very relaxed and likes to be with people," Gallagher said, holding Jai Jai, who was sporting a fleece-lined grey tweed hoodie with leather buckles. The group congregated first at one of the city's few dog parks, on its famous harbour front.

As they embarked on their walk, they ran the gamut of delivery drivers, loaded trolleys and Saturday shoppers on the streets of the busy Sheung Wan neighbourhood.

"Hong Kong is not a dog-friendly city," said Ivan Lo, who had brought dachshunds Kaka and CC for the walk.

"But they are good friends for us, for humans, so we still want to own one."

Gallagher said he hoped 2018 would see improvements in Hong Kong's canine landscape — the walk ended in a dog-friendly cafe.

For Isabella Redmayne, six, who came with dog Boris, the pleasures of owning a dachshund were simple.

"He's six-years-old like I am and he licks me on my face. He likes to go to sleep on his blanket and he's really soft," she said, adding that she hoped he would make new friends Saturday.

Kuwait



A team of horses competing on a racetrack in Ahmadi. (Ahmad Suroor — KUNA)

New Look

An exemplary father who nurtured children on noble principles

Dr Abdul promotes environmental awareness in the region

This is the second in a series of articles on Dr Abdul Rahman Abdullah Al Awadhi, physician, four times minister, writer and environmentalist.
— Editor

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By Lidia Qattan

Special to the Arab Times

In 1958 trouble broke out in Lebanon; indeed the whole world was in a flare of Arab Nationalism fanned by the rising popularity of Jamal Abdul Naser, the Egyptian president whose charisma was effecting the Arab world when in July 1956, he claimed the nationalization of the Suez Canal from the Anglo-French company.

The Arab Nationalism flare intensified with the vision of Pan-Arab unification when Egypt and Syria emerged into the United Arab Republic in 1958 and Jamal Abdul Naser was elected president... However, because of the basic difference in the national character of the two countries the union was doomed to failure from the onset.

Jamal Abdul Naser could not force nationalization in Syria as he did in Egypt and play-off organized labor against the industrialists and shareholders on which the Syrian economy was based.

Consequently the Baath party, which was strong in Lebanon, in Syria and in Iraq began to split into factions: some were pro-Egyptian, others pro-Iraq and one section was aiming independence from either side.

Abdul Rahman was to enter the medical school at the American University when fighting broke out in the streets of Lebanon making life dangerous for everyone; hence his

father pulled him out of Beirut and sent him to Germany, at the prestigious Heidelberg University, where he also had the advantage of learning a new language.

For three months Abdul Rahman was in Germany for a crash course in German language; when during his summer vacation he went to visit some friends in the UK. By chance he met Mrs Jackson, the Kuwait Charge d'Affair in London, responsible for the Kuwaiti students in England. Among her medical students were Abdul Razak Al Aduani, Abdul Razak Al Razaga and Abdul Mahsen Al Razaga.

Hearing that Abdul Rahman Al Awadhi had also intention of becoming a physician she convinced him to study in England instead of going back to Germany.

Evaluation

At the faculty of medicine of the Aberdeen University in Scotland Abdul Rahman was allowed to start from the third year of medical school after a formal evaluation of his BSc degree.

In 1963 he got his Medical Degree and returned home to practice medicine as resident physician at the Sabah Hospital.

After two years working at the hospital in 1965, Abdul Rahman was moved to the Planning Committee of the Ministry of Public Health.

Eager to expand his knowledge in

the new field, that same year (1965) he enrolled at the faculty of Public Health at Harvard University in Boston, USA where he got his MPH.

Medicine is the result of the development of centuries; forces beyond human control apparent in the environment as well as in the ever-broadening technological advancements affect the health of people.

Abdul Rahman's traumatic experience of childhood never faded with time. The more he was opening his mind to the scientific realm of medicine, the more he became fascinated by the complexity of the subject and the effect of the environment on health.

During the time he was studying abroad and after graduation, from 1966 to 1975, Abdul Rahman was conducting environmental researches in the preventive service of the Ministry of Health in Kuwait.

The result was a "Study of Allergy in Kuwait" published by the Ministry of Public Health in 1973, in which he emphasized the environmental factors on health.

That same year he published another study: the "Non Fatal Home Accidents in Kuwait".

At his return from the United States in 1969, Dr Abdul Rahman married a young physician, Sadika Al Awadi, one of his cousins who proved to be a perfect companion and sympathetic friend during the long years they have been together.

Besides being a practicing pediatrician Dr Sadika proved to be also an exemplary mother of five children, four boys and one girl.

Humanitarian

Happy in his private life Dr Abdul Rahman is an exemplary father.

Although quite busy in his work he always could find some time to spend with his children specially in their early years, nurturing them on noble humanitarian principles through story-telling while answering to their questions. When he could not be with them physically, he recorded the story on tape for their mother to play it for them.

When one of their children was born with a genetic defect (the Down's Syndrome), caused by one of the many chromosomal aberration, which effects approximately half percent of all human live births), both parents helped him to develop as normally as possible with a strong dose of love, understanding and infinite patience. Their endeavor has been well rewarded; for not only the boy has emerged into a happy and useful individual, it brought them closer together.

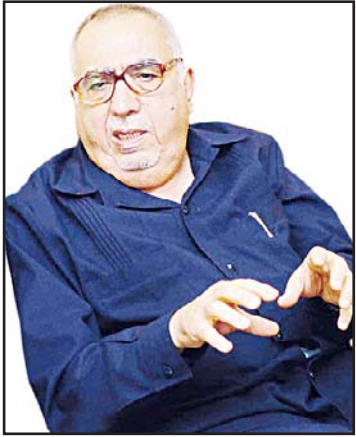
Indeed the whole family has become involved in sharing love and responsibility and that has brought them all closer, with a greater sense of life understanding and responsibility.

The whole experience evoked in Sadika a keener interest in genetics; hence besides being a pediatrician she became a doctor in genetic engineering. The first case of in-vitro birth in the country is to her credit.

Awareness

From the sixties Dr Abdul Rahman became involved in science-related activities besides his work as a practicing physician: For the terms 1966-69 and 1980-83 he was member of the WHO executive board, and president of the 33rd session of its General Assembly in 1980.

At the Ministry of Public Health



Dr Abdul Rahman Al-Awadhi

Dr Abdul Rahman was appointed Assistant Director of the Preventing Service Dept; then in 1971 he was promoted Director of the Department as Assistant Undersecretary.

Fascinated by politic Dr Abdul Rahman became actively involved with the parliamentary elections of 1975, but no sooner he was elected member of the new Parliament than he was chosen to be Minister of Public Health for the term 1975-83.

During this time he also carried out scientific researches on the environment and its relation to health and allergy, and became one of the leading Kuwaiti participants in the International Conference on Environment held in Stockholm in 1972.

As an active member in the Council of Arab Health Ministry, Dr Abdul Rahman took part in conferences whose objective was to establish national committees on the environment in Arab countries.

His whole purpose was to promote

at top levels awareness on the importance of the environment versus health.

Finally the idea became feasible when in 1974, the Kuwait Environment Protection Society was founded; Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadhi became its first elected chairman for the period 1974-78.

Development

During that time he played a leading role in developing various activities and programs to encourage environmental awareness in the Gulf countries as well.

To this end he engaged in negotiations with heads of states of the region and coordinated the effort of various United Nations specialized agencies towards the development of the Kuwait regional convention.

He also organized a conference of plenipotentiaries of the Gulf states for signing the Kuwait Regional Convention of 1978.

Achievement in one field led to others; in 1980 Dr Abdul Rahman Al Awadi established the Environmental Protection Council, within the Kuwait Ministry of Health, of which he was chairman for nine years.

During that time other projects concerning the general health were under study. In 1980 the "Kuwait Society for Smoking and Cancer Prevention" was founded and he was one of its founding members and chairman.

Two years later his idea of having a Kuwait Secretariat of the Regional Organization for Protection of the Marine Environment (ROPME) became feasible with himself among its founders.

To be continued

What's On horoscope

By Jacqueline Bigar

Happy birthday for Tuesday, Feb 6, 2018: This year you will open up to many new changes. However, in some areas you could become quite rigid and stuck. Consider other possibilities more than you have in the recent past. Confusion and uncertainty often surround you before you make any major decisions. If you are single, many people admire you, but few feel as though they can handle your intensity. Fall 2018 will be unusually exciting, as a new romance is likely to enter your life. If you are attached, work on the friendship that exists between you and your sweetie. Plan a special getaway together. SCORPIO is more insightful than usual.

The Stars Show the Kind of Day You'll Have: 5-Dynamic; 4-Positive; 3-Average; 2-So-so; 1-Difficult

Capricorn - (Dec 22 - Jan 19)

**** Avoid getting too focused on a personal matter. Other issues need your attention, especially those involving your friends. Your input is valued, and is likely to create a lot of thought and awareness. Listen to what is going on with a family member. Tonight: Out late.

Aquarius - (Jan 20 - Feb 18)

**** Someone might view you as being overly friendly and a bit too casual. Those characteristics easily could make this person feel uneasy. Try not to give in to a need to impress others. Express your compassion more subtly. Tonight: Propel yourself into the social scene!

Pisces - (Feb 19 - Mar 20)

***** You could be overwhelmed by everything that is happening around you. You might be able to swim for miles, but how well can you tread water for lengthy periods of time? Ask

more questions, and you'll be delighted by what you hear. Tonight: Consider taking a big plunge.

Aries - (Mar 21 - Apr 19)

**** Your fiery side emerges, which might cause you to be more outgoing than usual. Somehow you could trigger much more confusion than you or anyone else had thought possible. Tap into your creativity. Your sixth sense points you in the correct direction. Tonight: All smiles.

Taurus - (Apr 20 - May 20)

***** You might want to offer your support to others. Listen to your sixth sense as you attempt to clear out a problem, especially if it involves your finances. Confusion surrounds you and a loved one. Ask more questions, and you'll gain clarity. Tonight: Choose a favorite pastime.

Gemini - (May 21 - June 20)

***** One-on-one relating opens new doors. Understand what is happening around you, and refuse to be cornered by someone who thinks that he or she is in charge. Your smile goes a long way in loosening up the moment. Tonight: Someone close to you inspires you, and vice versa.

Cancer - (June 21 - July 22)

**** You could be more in touch with your feelings than you have been in the recent past. Don't push so hard to finish a creative project. Go with the flow, and you will feel much better. Examine your long-term goals. Ask for feedback, if necessary. Tonight: As you like it.

Leo - (July 23 - Aug 22)

***** You could be put off by someone you really care about. Don't worry so much about

what needs to happen next. This person often triggers more activity than you are comfortable with. Try pulling back some, and be more of an observer. Tonight: Homeward bound.

Virgo - (Aug 23 - Sept 22):

**** You could feel overloaded as others reach out to you. It appears as if everyone has a different idea about what works best in his or her life. Allow your loved ones to discuss what is on their minds. Your smile goes a long way in helping others relax. Tonight: Speak your mind.

Libra - (Sept 23 - Oct 22)

**** Be aware of how direct you need to be with a friend. Pressure could build to an unprecedented level. Understand what is happening within this friendship. Discuss your limits openly, especially when it comes to your finances. Tonight: Say "yes" to an invitation.

Scorpio - (Oct 23 - Nov 21)

***** You could be exhausted by everything that is going on around you. Stay centered, and remain in command of your ship. The drain you feel from others will seem a lot less intense if you pull back some. Others envy your ability to distance yourself. Tonight: Do your thing.

Sagittarius - (Nov 22 - Dec 21)

***** You will want to defer to a loved one about a situation that keeps popping up. Understand that you might have been in the wrong place at the wrong time. Your emotions emerge no matter what you are up to. Take time for a chat with a friend. Tonight: Veg a little.

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Born today: Singer/songwriter Axl Rose (1962), singer/songwriter Bob Marley (1945), actress Kathy Najimy (1957)

home decor



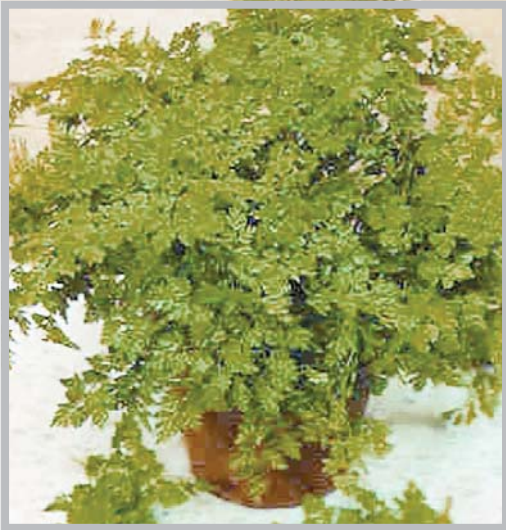
natural air fresheners

First dissolve the 1/8 cup baking soda in 2 cups hot water then add 1/2 cup lemon juice.

Bring 1 cup water, 1 cup household vinegar, 1 tbsp vanilla extract and 1 tsp cloves to a boil then simmer over medium heat for two minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool. Strain cloves then pour liquid into spray bottle, shake and use as needed.

Cut an orange in half and remove the pulp. Fill the empty shell with some salt. Put in the back of your fridge as a fridge freshener. Keep the orange shell in a small bowl so it won't tip over and spill the salt. The salt absorbs stale and nasty odors while the shell releases a fresh, orange smell. I also tuck one of these behind the toilet in our bathroom.

indoor gardening



anthriscus cerefolium

Chervil (Anthriscus cerefolium) is a delicate annual herb. This herb is native to the Middle East, southern Russia, and the Caucasus. The plants grow to 40-70 cm, with tripinnate leaves that may be curly. The small white flowers form small umbels, 2.5-5 cm across. The fruit is about 1 cm long, oblong-ovoid with a slender, ridged beak.

Site: It prefers a cool and moist location.

Temperature: Room temperature.

Water: Keep it well watered.

beauty tips



smooth lines with pencil liner

Rest the elbow of your dominant arm on a hard surface, and rest your wrist on your face. Tilt your head back slightly and bring your eyes to a half-open state. This creates a good angle for application, while allowing you to see what you're doing.

Use your index finger and pull your eyelid gently to the side and slightly up, toward the far end of your eyebrow. Draw a line across the upper lid on the lash line, as close to your lashes as possible while still on the lid.

taste buds



chocolate cream slush

Ingredients:

2 cups water

1 cup cream

1-1/2 cups granulated sugar

1/3 cup cocoa

1/2 teaspoon cinnamon

Method: Combine all the ingredients in a saucepan over medium high heat. Whisk the ingredients until sugar and cocoa have dissolved. This should take no more than 2 or 3 minutes. Once dissolved, remove pan from stove and cool, pour into a container. Freeze overnight. When frozen and ready to serve, scrape slush into cups, providing both a straw and a spoon.

Dear Abby

Father of twins fears wife suffering from depression

By Abigail Van Buren

Dear Abby: My wife gave birth to our twin girls almost a year ago, and for the most part, things have been great. They are happy and healthy, but I'm not sure how happy my wife is. I'm afraid she may be suffering from postpartum depression, but she won't see anyone about it.

She's always putting the girls first and is stressed out because there's never enough time in the day to do everything. From day one, I have made sure that I'm doing my part. I help cook and clean and change poop diapers. I feel I'm very hands-on, and she agrees. I know twins can be stressful, but I'm pretty relaxed about the process and go with the flow.

I have begged her to talk to someone, but she thinks if she does she will have to take antidepressants and won't be able to breastfeed. It's starting to affect our marriage because she takes out her frustration on me. I get yelled at for stuff that doesn't make sense or hasn't really happened.

Would it be wrong to tell her we are going to lunch and take her to see someone instead — like a mental health intervention? Or should I let her figure this out on her own?

— Baby blues in Michigan

Dear baby blues: To shanghai your wife into a mental health intervention would be a mistake. Be honest with your wife. Tell her you are deeply concerned, and that her stress level is affecting your marriage. Then tell her you will be making an appointment for her with her OB-GYN and accompanying her. The doctor can tell her what the alternatives are for treatment, if she needs it. Her fears may be groundless, and medication may not be necessary, but it is important that her doctor evaluate her.

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Dear Abby: I have been with my husband for 10 years. Things are great, except for one major issue. Every time we get into a spat, he feels the need to air all of our dirty laundry to his family, which is now my family.

I am a private person. I don't like having other people in the middle of our drama. He tells his relatives his side of the story, and because they don't hear my side, they automatically assume he is some sort of victim. I then start receiving phone calls and text messages from everyone wanting to know what's going on and trying to give me advice. When I politely turn them down, they get angry and start lecturing me about how wrong I am.

This happens often, no matter how small the argument. What do I do? How can I get him to see how much it bothers me? I don't want the world to know what goes on in our home. Nothing I say gets through to him.

— Betrayed and alone

Dear betrayed: Your husband knows how much what he's doing bothers you. He just doesn't care. He knows that when he runs to his family he will have automatic allies.

It will take work on both your parts with the help of an unbiased licensed marriage and family therapist for your marriage to improve. If your husband won't go with you — and he may not — you should go without him. Because of his level of immaturity, it's a wonder your marriage has made it this long without intervention.

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Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Contact Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

(Source: Universal Uclick)



A photo from the event.

Bharathiya Pravasi Parishad officials visit the Indian Ambassador

Bharathiya Pravasi Parishad (BPP) Kuwait officials visited the Indian Ambassador to Kuwait, His Excellency Sri Jeevasagar. The BPP General Secretary Narayanan Othayoth introduced the other officials to the ambassador. The ambassador was updated on the numerous socio-cultural activities of BPP till date, by its President, Advocate Sumod.

The Joint Secretary Ajikumar Alapuram briefed the ambassador on the various humanitarian activities of BPP in India and Kuwait. The various issues faced by Indian expatriates in Kuwait were also brought to the notice of the ambassador. The ambassador not only expressed his deep satisfaction in the BPP activities but also ensured all kinds of support to the organisation.

Treasurer Surendran, Vice-President Binoy Sebastian, Embassy Coordinator T.G. Venugopal, Jobs Cell Secretary Ajay Ellora, Welfare Secretary Rajesh Thiruvonam along with BPP Ladies Wing Shreeshakthi President Dr Saritha Hari and General Secretary Vidya Sumod were part of the official BPP team which met the Indian Ambassador.

what's on today

emergency number 112

Civil ID info: 1889988

Site for checking travel ban www.kuwaitcourts.gov.kw/mojweb/NGeneral/Main.jsp

■ **MISK offers EC processing service:** Those who do not have valid passport will have to obtain Emergency Certificate from Indian Embassy Kuwait. A special voluntary service center at Salmiya Indian Model School on behalf of MISK will render the EC Processing Services.

Date: from Jan 31 till Feb 15 (2:30 pm till 5:00 pm) except Friday and Saturday.

Venue: Salmiya Indian Model School (Block # 12, Mughira Bin Shuiba Street, Salmiya. Contact # 55130271/97285358 / 99561786

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■ **ISF opens amnesty helpline:** Indian Social Forum Kuwait (ISF) highly appreciated the new amnesty declared by Ministry of Interior. This will help thousands of expatriates including Indians illegally living in Kuwait due to various reasons.

ISF urged all illegal residents especially Indian citizens to utilize this opportunity either to legalize their residency or to leave the country as soon as possible.

Indian Social Forum has opened Amnesty Helpline in various languages to assist the beneficiaries of amnesty during the amnesty period from Jan 29 to Feb 22, 2018.

The on call/WhatsApp support helpline is available in English (66624501/65962683), Hindi/Urdu (66597993/97594928), Telugu (97594928), Tamil (69626284/99133474), Kannada/Beary/Tulu (99502159/65962683) and Malayalam (99083007/66624501)

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■ **TIES Center events:** TIES Center announces following events – Tajweed and Recitation: Learn and practice the

art of reciting the Holy Quran (tajweed). The instructor will also answer questions related to the meaning of the Arabic words and verses.

Every Sunday & Tuesday @ 10 – 11:30am; every Monday @ 5-6:30pm.

The TIES Center is the social and educational hub for English Speaking expats in Kuwait. For more information, please call 25231015 or e-mail info@tiescenter.net or visit www.tiescenter.net.

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■ **IPC Islamic Courses:** 'Say, O my Lord, let me grow in knowledge'. IPC is offering Islamic courses in English (for ladies only). Muslims and non-Muslims are welcome.

1. Tilawa Surah Ar-Rad and Surah Ibrahim — Sundays at 5:30-7:00 pm; 2. Principles of Tafsir (part 2) - Sundays at 7:00-8:30 pm; 3. Tajweed 3 - Tuesday, at 5:30-7:00 pm; 4. Jesus in Surah Mariam (part 2) - Tuesdays at 7:00-8:30 pm.

Instructor: Sr Zeinab Hassan Ashry Place: IPC - Women Section Al-Rawdah, Area 3, Street 30, House 12, opp 4th Ring Road.

Email: ipc_sch@yahoo.com, Telephone: 22512257.

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■ **Redeemed Christian Church:** The Redeemed Christian Church of God (HOD Parish) worship in English.

Celebration Service: Friday 9 am – 11 am; Divine encounter: Sunday, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm; Digging Deep (Bible studies): Tuesday, 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm; Night vigil every last Friday of the month from 10 pm.

Venue: New Mishref. For more information and direction please call 9927-6603, 6557-7482. Email: rcchouseof-davidq8@gmail.com

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■ **KTCC activities:** Worship service – every Wednesday 7:00-9:00 pm at North Tent, NECK.

Children's Bible School – every Wednesday 7 to 9 pm at Activity Building, NECK.

Overnight prayer – every 1st Thursday from 10 pm – 4:00 am at Diwaniya, NECK.

Communion Service – every 3rd Wednesday.

The Following meeting are held at our KTCC Prayer House:

1) Children Bible School Teacher's Prayer – 1st Saturday 7 to 9 pm.



Dearest Armando, on your 17th birthday today, we pray that God showers His choicest blessings on you and guides you today and always, in the many more years to come. May the Lord Almighty bless and protect you always and guide you in His path. We love you, from your brother Gilbert, mom (Ana) and dad (Kevin).

Items for the What's On page can be sent directly to the Arab Times, P.O. Box 2270, 13023, Safat or faxed to 24618267 or e-mail to arabtimes@arabtimesonline.com.

All items on this page are published as a courtesy to the public. These announcements can include birthday greetings, weddings, social functions or any other non-commercial events. Photographs of all events are welcome.

2) Children's Prayer – 2nd Friday 6:30 pm to 8:30 pm.

3) Bible Study – every 2nd and 4th Sunday at 7:30 pm to 9:00 pm.

4) ISOM – Batch 1 Class Tuesdays – 7 to 9 pm and Batch 2 Class Fridays – 4 to 6 pm.

5) Choir Practice – Mondays – 6 to 8 pm.

6) Men's Fellowship – 4th Friday – 10:00 am to 12:00 pm.

7) Women's Prayer – (Abbasiya) – 3rd Sunday – 6:30 to 8:30 pm and (Salmiya) 4th Tuesday – 6:30 to 8:30 pm.

8) Fasting Prayer – every 3rd Friday from 12:00 Noon – 3:30 pm.

9) Cottage Prayers – every 2nd and 4th Week.

10) Baptism Service – every 4th Friday.

Welcome to all Tamil known people to participate in our regular activities to worship the Lord in our own mother tongue and be blessed!

For details or for any prayer needs contact Tel No: 66920350 / 99432849.

Health

Sanofi rejects Philippine refund plea

Painkiller abuse sparks fear for Gabon's young

LIBREVILLE, Feb 5, (Agencies): Misuse of a powerful painkiller has spread like wildfire among schools in the west African state of Gabon, where teachers blame it for violent changes in mood among normally placid and motivated teenagers.

Known as "kobolo" by local youths, the drug comprises high doses of anti-inflammatory medicine, usually washed down with soda or alcohol. In the United States, abuse of such opioid drugs, say experts, has abetted a crisis of addiction and misery.

"It's easier to ask who in our state schools is not taking kobolo," said a young music teacher in a Libreville high school, who gave her name as Chantal.

Aggressive

"It starts at secondary level, from the age of 12 or 13. The children go through changes almost overnight — they become aggressive and violent under the effects of kobolo, which we regularly find when we go through their schoolbags," she adds. "The worst thing is that the kids not only use it, they sell it, too."

Almost every week, the press report knife fights between pupils, largely blamed on their use of kobolo, and on arrests of drug dealers, often deemed to be connected to the pharmaceutical business or from Cameroon.

"Kobolo is a combination based on painkillers that act directly on the brain. It induces feelings of well-being due to the secretion of dopamine, the pleasure hormone," said Marie-Louise Rondi, who chairs the National Order of Pharmacists in Gabon.

"This explains addiction and the tendency to increase daily doses, until all the safety fuses in the brain have been blown."

When used by young Gabonese as a recreational drug, the painkiller Tramadol or a generic equivalent is taken in large doses, sometimes mixed with alcohol and a range of juices.

In 2017, its popularity began

to spread fast in a country where consumption of cannabis and other substances is very limited.

By July, concern had become so great that prescriptions for the drug became compulsory, and social support was beefed up. "We had meetings with the parents of students to warn them of the scale of the problem," Rondi said.

Under the pseudonym Ted, a self-described "ex-user" of kobolo in his 20s, who comes from a poor neighbourhood, described what it was like to take the drug.

"With a soft drink, it's like you're asleep, having a waking dream. But if you drink it down with a little alcohol, well then..." he guffawed.

"It awakens your sleeping senses, when you take it you become hot. You can't control yourself, you imagine you're a super-hero, you lose your feelings," laughs the young man. "It gives you too much courage... You don't even feel pain."

Proof of this risk, he displayed a large scar on a forearm — the legacy of an accident when he "went through a car windshield without feeling hurt."

Other collateral damage includes loss of appetite and sleep, itching, "epilepsy attacks, liver problems and memory lapses," he said. Others say unsafe sex is another risk.

Also:

MANILA, Philippines: A Sanofi Pasteur official said Monday that the French drugmaker couldn't comply with the Philippines' request for a refund of dengue vaccines injected on hundreds of thousands of children because it would imply that the drug is ineffective.

Thomas Triomphe, Sanofi Pasteur's Asia-Pacific chief, told a House of Representatives hearing that it's clear in "absolute terms" that the Philippines would reduce dengue infections more by using the company's Dengvaxia vaccine than by halting its use.



In this May 25, 2017 file photo, chemotherapy drugs are administered to a patient at North Carolina Cancer Hospital in Chapel Hill, NC. Health experts are stepping up warnings as more cardiac side effects of some breast cancer treatments come to light. In its first guidance on the issue released on Feb 1, 2018, the American Heart Association urges that women and their doctors carefully weigh the risks and benefits of any therapy that may cause heart damage. (AP)

'Chronic Lyme disease'

Study shows evidence of lingering PTLDS

NEW YORK, Feb 5: In a study of 61 people treated for the bacteria that causes Lyme disease, Johns Hopkins researchers conclude that fatigue, pain, insomnia and depression do indeed persist over long periods of time for some people, despite largely normal physical exams and clinical laboratory testing.

"Post-treatment Lyme disease syndrome (PTLDS) is a real disorder that causes severe symptoms in the absence of clinically detectable infection," says John N. Aucott, M.D., associate professor of medicine at the Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine and director of the Johns Hopkins Lyme Disease Clinical Research Center.

The findings, published in the December issue of *Frontiers in Medicine*, could spur further investigation into the cause of persistent symptoms, a source of medical controversy. As Lyme disease rates have steadily climbed in the United States since it was first recognized in the mid-1970s, so have re-

ports of a collection of symptoms that patients commonly refer to as chronic Lyme disease. Experts in the field have questioned the validity of this term because of the lack of direct evidence in this group of patients of ongoing infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the bacterium that causes Lyme disease.

Efforts to better understand patients with these symptoms have largely failed, says Aucott, because patients grouped under the umbrella term "chronic Lyme disease" could belong to one of various subgroups.

"People have been comparing apples to oranges by grouping all of those with chronic Lyme disease together," he says. "Our study was designed to compare apples to apples."

To do that, Aucott and his colleagues first agreed to study individuals with PTLDS, a disorder defined by the Infectious Diseases Society of America as the development of significant fatigue, widespread musculoskeletal pain and/or cognitive difficulties that arise within six months after com-

pletion of antibiotic therapy for physician-documented Lyme disease and that last for at least six months. They meticulously gathered prior medical records for evidence of Lyme disease and excluded patients with conditions that may mimic those of PTLDS.

Aucott cautions that because so little is known about the origins of PTLDS, its underlying cause has remained unclear, and a range of hypotheses exist. This study, and the term "PTLDS," do not define the cause of the condition, but do provide a starting place for future studies.

The researchers recruited 61 patients who were either self- or physician-referred to the Lyme Disease Clinical Research Center at Johns Hopkins and who met the study criteria. Roughly half were women and half were men, ranging in age between 18 and 82. Also recruited were 26 healthy controls, also split nearly evenly between the sexes and about the same ages as the other group, with no clinical history of Lyme disease symptoms and

no antibodies to *Borrelia burgdorferi* that would indicate past or current infection.

For each of these individuals, Aucott and his team ran a comprehensive battery of clinical and laboratory tests. A trained interviewer collected a detailed medical history, and participants received a physical exam that assessed vital signs and examined various organs and joints. They also received an extensive neurological assessment. Laboratory tests checked for general markers of health in their blood as well as antibody markers of past exposure to Lyme disease. Study participants also completed standardized questionnaires that measure the severity of fatigue, pain, sleep disturbance and depression, as well as quality of life.

Aucott says that between the two groups, few clinically significant differences existed in results of the physical exams and clinical laboratory tests, except for an abnormal inability to sense vibrations in some PTLDS patients.

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	12 Strong		21:30, 00:05 (Fri)		11:55, 14:20, 18:15,	Muhalab	18:15, 20:15 (Daily Exc Fri)		01:15 (Sat)	Wonder	
360°	22:10	Sharqia	12:30, 19:30, 22:00,		19:05, 00:10 (Sat)		19:30, 21:25, 01:15 (Fri)	Fanar	14:00, 21:30, 23:15,	360°	18:20
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Avenues	15:30		13:05, 15:30, 15:35,		13:30, 16:00, 19:15 (Fri)		22:00, 00:05 (Daily Exc Fri)		13:30, 00:30 (Fri)	360°	15:20
	14:55		18:10, 20:15, 20:45,				15:45, 20:00, 22:00,	Sharqia	17:15, 23:00, 00:45		15:35, 21:35
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360°	12:45, 20:40, 23:15		15:30, 15:35, 18:10,		15:40, 20:55, 23:45	Marina	18:45, 20:45		13:40, 17:00, 21:00,	Fanar	18:30 (Tue, Wed, Sun)
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	12:15, 21:35, 22:40,	Marina	20:35		17:50, 20:40, 22:00,		16:55, 19:35		The Commuter		
	(Daily Exc Fri)		12:00, 14:00, 21:45,		23:30 (Daily Exc Fri)		(Daily Exc Fri, Sat, Mon)	360°	21:25, 23:35		Touch Chesi Chudu (Telugu)
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	Day Of The Dead: Bloodline				00:05 (Daily Exc Fri)				(Daily Exc Fri)		15:30, 18:30, 21:30 (Fri)
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			13:30, 17:45		00:15 (Tue, Wed, Sun)		15:05, 15:15, 17:05,		The Post		Carbon (Malayalam)
	Dead Awake				13:30, 19:15, 00:15 (Thu)		19:00, 20:00, 21:00,	360°	18:00		15:30, 21:45 (Daily Exc Fri)
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	00:45 (Fri)		17:40, 19:05, 00:10						18:30 (Thu, Sat)		
	11:30, 14:00, 16:30,		(Daily Exc Wed, Fri, Sat)		Okdat El Khawaga (Arabic Film)	360°	Slumber				
	19:00, 21:30, 00:05		11:55, 14:20, 15:15,	360°	14:30, 18:45, 20:45,		15:50, 22:00, 01:15				
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First Abu Dhabi gets securities licence in Saudi

First Abu Dhabi Bank, the largest bank in the United Arab Emirates by assets, has been given the go-ahead by Saudi Arabia's regulator to conduct arranging and advising activities in the securities sector, a source close to the matter said.

It is the latest foreign bank attracted by opportunities in Saudi Arabia, which is embarking on an investment drive to diversify its economy beyond oil revenues.

FAB, created by last year's merger between National Bank of Abu Dhabi and First Gulf Bank, said last week that it was working on expanding its business in Saudi Arabia.

In a statement on Monday, Saudi Arabia's Capital Market Authority said it had authorised First Abu Dhabi Investment Saudi Co to conduct arranging and advising activities in the securities busi-

ness. It did not elaborate.

The source close to the matter said the licence applied to FAB, which has participated in Saudi deals since its creation. Last month, it was one of eight international banks to provide a \$2.6 billion bridge syndicated loan to state-controlled utility Saudi Electricity Co. The bank does not currently have a branch or representative office in Saudi Arabia. (RTRS)

Total to sell 25 pct stake in S. African block to QP

Qatar Petroleum said on Monday it had signed an agreement with French oil and gas major Total to acquire a 25 percent stake in an exploration block, offshore South Africa, in a deal that would strengthen Total's ties with the Qatari energy giant.

Following the sale, the new ownership structure for the block will see Total have 45 percent, Qatar Petroleum 25 percent,

CNR International 20 percent and Main Street will own 10 percent, Total and QP said in statements.

"This agreement is another step by Qatar Petroleum ... in expanding and reinforcing Qatar's leading position in the field of energy across the globe," QP's Chief Executive Saad al-Kaabi said, adding that the drilling of an exploration well is planned this

year.

The agreement comes at a sensitive time for Doha, which is in the midst of a protracted crisis with its Gulf neighbours.

OPEC kingpin Saudi Arabia and the United Arab Emirates cut ties with Doha in June, saying Qatar backed terrorism and was cosyng up to rival Iran. Qatar rejected the accusations. (RTRS)

Market Movements5-02-2018

▲

AUSTRALIA

- All Ordinaries

-101.40

6,128.40

▲

JAPAN

- Nikkei

-592.45

22,682.08

▲

GERMANY

- DAX

-97.67

12,687.49

▲

FRANCE

- CAC 40

-79.15

5,285.83

▼

EUROPE

- Euro Stoxx 50

-44.51

3,478.77

▼

S. KOREA

- KRX 100

-57.86

5,159.60

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PHILIPPINES

- All Shares

-111.40

5,070.42

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INDIA

- Sensex

-309.59

34,757.16

▼

HONG KONG

- Hang Seng

-356.56

32,245.22

Business

Energy stocks have room to build on solid start

Rebound in oil prices, climbing US production boost index

NEW YORK, Feb 5, (RTRS): Energy stocks have got off to a strong start this year and look poised to run further, fueled in part by a rebound in oil prices, climbing US production and investors looking to take advantage of shares that could be a bargain after a disappointing 2017.

The S&P 500 energy index fell 3.8 percent in 2017, one of only two of its 11 major sectors to close out the year in negative territory, even as the overall S&P 500 rallied nearly 20 percent.

Those declines came despite a friendlier energy policy by the administration of US President Donald Trump, while investors remained unconvinced a rise of more than 12 percent in WTI crude oil to the \$60 a barrel by the end of the year mark would hold.

But a combination of factors, including global economic growth, continued weakness in the dollar, the ability of OPEC to keep production curbs in place and restraint on the part of US shale producers has helped lift WTI over the \$65 mark and convince investors the higher prices are now sustainable. Energy stocks climbed 3.8 percent in January before stumbling nearly 6

percent this week as part of a broad market selloff.

The higher prices have not only boosted the attractiveness of energy stocks, but have bolstered the prospects for a rebound in shale production. Output for US oil is poised to climb above 10 million barrels a day, which would top a record set in 1970 and cement the status of the United States as the No. 2 producer in the world.

"We are feeling good about the overall sector, we are feeling good about the space," said Lisa Shalett, head of wealth management investment resources and head of investment & portfolio strategies at Morgan Stanley Wealth Management in New York.

"It is supported both in terms of the fundamentals, the fundamentals having more staying power and that staying power translating into better earnings growth." The relative performance of the S&P energy index has generally tracked oil prices, but a gap emerged in 2017 as crude prices recovered but shares in energy companies lagged, indicating they are primed to catch up.

While the forward price to earnings ratio (PE) of the energy index at nearly 24 is well above the 18.6 for the S&P 500, that number is set to decrease as the sector has the second highest percentage of upward estimate revisions of the major S&P groups through Thursday morning, according to Thomson Reuters data. In addition, the relative price-to-book ratio of the sector is near a 10-year low at 0.6,

Hedge funds pause oil buying as rally runs out of steam

John Kemp is a Reuters market analyst. The views expressed are his own — Editor

By John Kemp

Hedge fund managers have cut their bullish exposure to petroleum for the first time in six weeks as oil prices stalled and sentiment turned more cautious amid concerns about an increasingly crowded trade.

Fund managers cut their net long position in the six most important futures and options contracts linked to crude and fuels by 21 million barrels in the week to Jan 30.

suggesting it is undervalued. Names such as Chesapeake Energy , with a forward PE under 5, and Cimarex Energy, at a 15.6 forward PE, are among the cheapest in the sector.

Also supporting oil prices has been the continued weakness in the dollar, which has helped demand. The greenback in January suffered its worst monthly performance against a basket of major currencies, down 3.25 percent, since March 2016. Demand for crude is sapped by a stronger dollar, which is priced in the currency.

"There are several things going for

The reduction was small and comes after the net long position was increased by 258 million barrels over the previous five weeks and by 1,174 million barrels since the end of June.

Nonetheless it came after portfolio managers had built a record net long position in Brent, NYMEX and ICE WTI, US gasoline, US heating oil and European gasoil a week earlier.

Long positions had come to outnumber short ones by a record ratio of more than 11:1, fuelling concerns about lopsided positioning and the risk of a correction.

In the most recent week, fund

managers cut their net long position in Brent (-7 million barrels) and West Texas Intermediate (-18 million barrels), according to records published by regulators and exchanges.

Changes in US gasoline (+3 million barrels), US heating oil (-2 million barrels) and European gasoil (+4 million barrels) were smaller and more mixed.

There is not enough data to determine whether the position reduction was merely a pause after an extraordinary bull market or the start of a more sustained pull back.

Bearish short positions remain

very low, with just 134 million barrels of short futures and option positions across the six major contracts, the lowest level since June 2014, before prices started slumping.

But benchmark Brent prices have been softening since hitting a high over \$71 per barrel on Jan 25 and are now trading at levels first seen near the start of last month.

With so many long positions already in the market, but upward momentum fading and prices failing to make new highs, the temptation to realise some profits by reducing long exposure is increasing. (RTRS)

Indians continue to dominate top position with 12.1 million passengers

Dubai airport retains top international spot in 2017

DUBAI, Feb 5, (AFP): Dubai airport was the world's busiest for international passengers in 2017 for the fourth year running, with 88.2 million travellers, a statement said on Monday.

International traffic at the UAE airport increased by 4.6 million passengers or 5.5 percent compared to the previous year, operator Dubai Airports announced, despite a lap-top ban temporarily imposed on its long-haul flights to the United States.

A major transit hub situated on transcontinental air routes, Dubai is one of several Gulf-based airports to have experienced prodigious growth in recent years.

Indians continued to dominate the top position with 12.1 million passengers arriving at Dubai airport last year, up 5.4 percent on 2016, the statement said.

British passengers came in second place with 6.5 million, overtaking Saudis who came in third place with 6.4 million passengers.

The biggest rise was in the number of Russian passengers who soared by 28 percent to 1.34 million, followed by Chinese travellers who increased by 19.4 percent to 2.2 million.

The surge came after UAE relaxed restrictions for both nations, offering citizens from those countries visas on arrival.

The airport recorded 10,000 less flights than the previous year, but planes were filled closer to capacity, with an average of 223 per flight -- an increase of nearly seven percent.

Cargo rose by 2.4 percent to a record 2.65 million tonnes.

CEO of Dubai Airports Paul Griffiths said the number of passengers is expected to grow to 90.3 million in 2018 as authorities turn their focus to implementing DXB Plus programme to raise the airport's annual capacity to 118 million travellers.

Dubai International, the base for Dubai carrier Emirates and its budget airline FlyDubai, surpassed London's Heathrow airport in terms of international passengers in 2014 and has maintained its lead since.



Jerome Powell (right), takes the oath of office as he is sworn-in as the new Chairman of the Federal Reserve (FED) by Randal Quarles (left), Vice-Chair for Supervision, at the Federal Reserve Building in Washington, DC on Feb 5. (AFP)

Analysts point to challenges on the horizon

Powell sworn in as 16th US Fed chair

WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (AFP): Former investment banker Jerome "Jay" Powell was sworn in Monday as the 16th leader of the US Federal Reserve, taking a key role in overseeing the world's largest economy.

Perhaps the wealthiest Fed chair ever, Powell, 65, takes the reins of monetary policy just as a decade of economic recovery has begun to crest, and as analysts are pointing to challenges on the horizon.

Powell said he was committed to explaining the Fed's policy moves, a signal likely to be welcomed by conservative lawmakers who have called for the central bank to follow strict for-

mulas in setting interest rates -- a requirement Fed officials have opposed.

Powell also said the banking reforms enacted since the 2008 crisis made the financial sector stronger.

"We intend to keep it that way," he said in comments after taking the oath of office.

But he struck a note of balance, perhaps a nod to the Trump administration priority to reduce regulatory burdens in the economy.

"We will also work hard to make sure that our regulation and supervision are efficient as well as effective," Powell said.

"At the Federal Reserve, we know

that our decisions matter for American households and businesses."

Spain's second-biggest bank BBVA also said it has no restrictions in place on such purchases.

Last week Mastercard Inc, the world's second biggest payments network, said customers buying cryptocurrencies with credit cards fuelled a 1 percentage point increase in overseas transaction volumes in the fourth quarter.

At that time Bitcoin was staging a spectacular rise in value, reaching a peak of \$19,187 on Dec 16 on the Luxembourg-based Bitstamp exchange.

But the biggest and best-known cryptocurrency has since fallen dra-

VANCOUVER, Feb 5, (RTRS): The liquefied natural gas market is growing every year, but the terminals that ship and receive the fuel are shrinking.

The booming sector's next-generation infrastructure is being designed for a emerging-market buyers that want smaller volumes on shorter, more flexible contracts.

LNG export terminals, where the gas is liquefied and put on vessels for shipping, have traditionally been massive, custom-built facilities that cost tens of billions of dollars. And so to justify the investment, they have typically required equally massive, long-term supply deals, often lasting a decade or more.

Numerous terminal projects on the horizon, by contrast, are new modular-style designs built to snap together like Legos, allowing for small to mid-scale liquefaction or regasification plants that can be expanded if and when demand grows.

The first next-generation liquefaction plant is under construction in the US state of Georgia and is expected to begin operating mid-year.

These facilities, with far smaller liquefaction units -- known as trains -- are "more consistent with market conditions," said John Baguley, chief operating officer of Australia-based LNG Ltd, which has proposed mid-scale LNG plants in the United States and Canada.

The new designs reflect a maturing market with a more diverse base of customers that will drive future growth.

In 2008, the average contract was for 18 years and more than 2 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa). By 2016, it had dropped to less than eight years and less than 1 Mtpa, with new buyers in emerging markets like China, India and Pakistan seeking flexibility due to market uncertainty.

These new buyers are fueling small utilities and industrial users such as fertilizer plants and factories, said Alfred Moujaes, Houston President for Atlantic, Gulf and Pacific Company. The firm is building small, modular plants for LNG buyers, who need to convert the liquefied fuel back to a gas form after shipping.

Typically, such markets will be small at first, but the hope is that demand will grow as additional customers convert to LNG, Moujaes said. The modular plants allow terminals to grow with the market.

Demand for liquefied natural gas, or LNG, has taken off in recent years as it is a cleaner fuel than oil or coal, and abundant supply has driven its price sharply lower.

Overall global consumption of LNG rose to 33.1 billion cubic feet per day in 2016, about 10 percent of total natural gas usage; it is expected to grow by 75 percent by 2027, according to the US Energy Information Administration.

The United States, with its abundant supply of pipeline gas and well-developed energy hubs such as the US Gulf Coast, is emerging as a dominant global producer.

US export capacity has shot up from less than 2 million tonnes per annum (Mtpa) in 2015 to 18 Mtpa in 2017, and is projected to top 77 Mtpa by 2022, transforming the United States into the world's No. 2 exporter behind Australia.

In 2005, just 15 countries imported LNG; now there are 39, with another eight expected to hit the market by 2022, according to the International Energy Agency.

The new style of North American liquefaction projects will be built in Asia before being shipped to the United States for assembly. At the heart of these new terminals are modular trains which produce just a fraction of the LNG of a traditional train.

Market growing every year

LNG terminals get smaller to offer flexible contracts

The United States in March imposed a ban on laptops and tablet computers inside the cabin on inbound flights from several Middle Eastern and North African countries including the United Arab Emirates.

But Emirates airline in July announced it had won an exemption from the ban for flights from its Dubai hub after implementing new security measures.

Emirates Airline operates a fleet of 269 aircraft, including 101 Airbus 380 superjumbo planes and the rest are Boeing 777s.

LONDON, Feb 5, (RTRS): Banks in Britain and the United States have banned the use of credit cards to buy Bitcoin and other "cryptocurrencies", fearing a plunge in their value will leave customers unable to repay their debts.

Lloyds Banking Group Plc, Britain's biggest lender, said on Sunday it would ban its credit card customers from buying cryptocurrencies, following the lead of US banking giants JP Morgan Chase & Co and Citigroup.

The move is aimed at protecting customers from running up huge debts from buying virtual currencies on credit, if their values were to plummet, a Lloyds spokeswoman said.

Concerns have arisen among credit card providers because their customers have increasingly been using credit cards to fund accounts on online exchanges, which are then used to purchase the digital currencies.

However, other banks said on Monday they will continue to allow credit card customers to buy cryptocurrencies.

"We constantly review our protections for customers as a responsible bank and lender, and are keeping this matter under close review," a spokeswoman for Barclays said.

"At present UK customers can use both their Barclays debit card and

Barclaycard credit card to purchase cryptocurrency legitimately," she said.

Spain's second-biggest bank BBVA also said it has no restrictions in place on such purchases.

Last week Mastercard Inc, the world's second biggest payments network, said customers buying cryptocurrencies with credit cards fuelled a 1 percentage point increase in overseas transaction volumes in the fourth quarter.

At that time Bitcoin was staging a spectacular rise in value, reaching a peak of \$19,187 on Dec 16 on the Luxembourg-based Bitstamp exchange.

But the biggest and best-known cryptocurrency has since fallen dra-

matically and on Monday was down by 10 percent to \$7,345 at 1608 GMT on Bitstamp, extending losses from Friday amid worries of a global regulatory clampdown.

The decision on whether to allow credit card users to buy cryptocurrencies is a credit risk decision made by the card-issuing banks, a spokesman for Mastercard said.

A spokeswoman for Chase bank said it is not currently processing credit card purchases of cryptocurrencies because of the volatility and risk involved, while a Citi spokeswoman confirmed a similar ban, but did not give a reason.

The bans extends only to credit card

purchases, with debit card users still able to buy cryptocurrencies.

"Across Lloyds Bank, Bank of Scotland, Halifax and MBNA, we do not accept credit card transactions involving the purchase of cryptocurrencies," the Lloyds spokeswoman said in an email.

Lloyds did not say how it planned to enforce the ban, although the Telegraph newspaper reported on Sunday that its credit card customers will be blocked from buying Bitcoin online through a "blacklist" that will flag sellers.

A spokeswoman from the Royal Bank of Scotland declined to comment on the bank's policy.

February offers

A promo photo of VIVA's 'February Offers'.



VIVA launches 'February Offers'

VIVA, Kuwait's fastest-growing and most developed telecom operator, launched a variety of offers this month, celebrating the kick-off of the "Hala February" festival and the National and Liberation Days. The "February Offers" include valuable instant prizes and more benefits on plans for both VIVA postpaid and prepaid customers.

Prizes will be on a 'first come first serve' basis every "Friday" of February 2018. Customers will enjoy amazing 'Scratch & Win' vouchers at VIVA's Avenues Mall branch

once they subscribe to any of VIVA's voice or data postpaid plans. The vouchers allow them to instantly win one of plenty valuable instant prizes including ATVs, LED screens and smart devices.

To find out more about "February Offers", visit one of VIVA's 89 branches, or VIVA's official website at www.viva.com.kw, or access round the clock assistance from team of specialists available on the VIVA's customer care line 102.

DAMAC

DAMAC Properties, the second largest listed real estate developer in Dubai, is in talks with banks about a possible issue of US dollar-denominated Islamic bonds, sources familiar with the matter said on Monday.

Discussions about a new issue are at an early stage, said the sources, declining to be named because the talks are private. (RTRS)

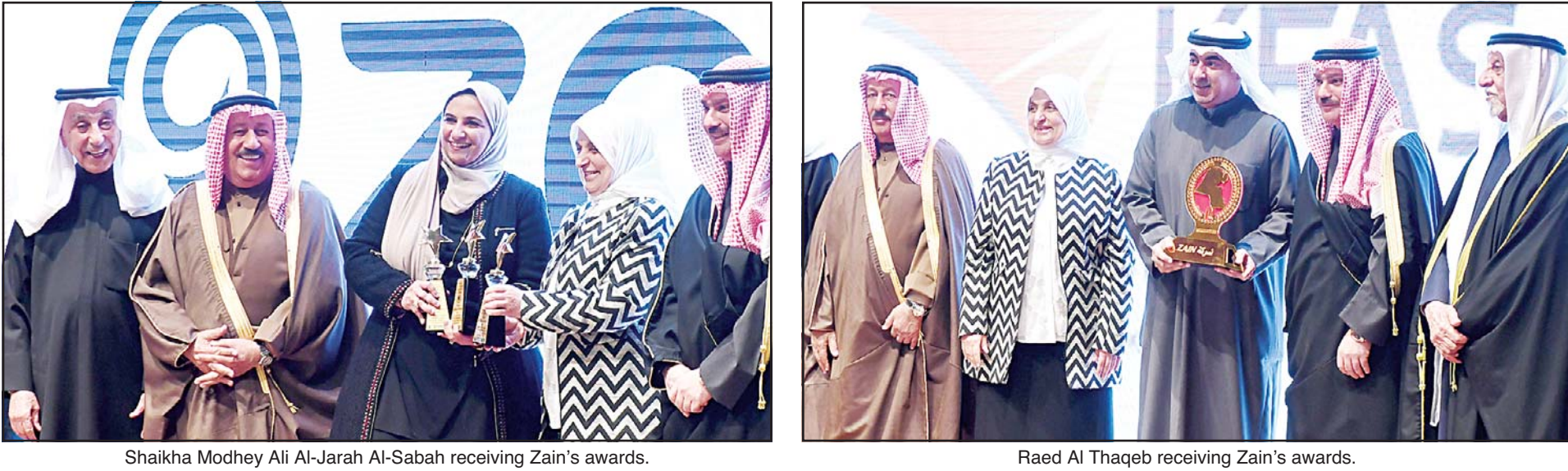
Company honored at Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize for 2017

Zain receives three public relations and customer service awards

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Zain, the leading telecommunications company in Kuwait, was awarded with three awards in the fields of public relations and customer service as part of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize for the year 2017. The prize, hosted by Kuwait's Public Relations Association, came under the patronage of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al Ahmad Al Jaber Al Sabah.

The awarding ceremony witnessed the attendance of HH the Amir's representative HE the Minister of Social Affairs and Labor and State Minister for Economic Affairs Hind Al Sabeeh, HE Head of Amiri Protocols Sheikh Khalid Al Abdullah Al Sabah, and Head of Kuwait's Public Relations Association Jamal Al Nasrullah, who awarded Zain's Regulatory and Government Affairs Director Shaikha Modhey Ali Al Jarah Al-Sabah and Zain's Customer Care Director Raed Al Thaqeb with the Excellence in Call Center Award, Excellence in VIP Customer Service, and Excellence in Corporate Sustainability and Social Responsibility.

Kuwait's Public Relations Association dedicates this prize to shed



Shaikha Modhey Ali Al-Jarah Al-Sabah receiving Zain's awards.

Raed Al Thaqeb receiving Zain's awards.

light on the distinguished efforts and achievements of companies and organizations in the fields of public relations and customer service across all industries from both the public and private sectors. The event also featured a number of workshops about the strategies of PR and customer service targeted at employees of ministries and organizations.

The judging committee — responsible for selecting the winners — consisted of local and international PR and Customer Service experts who evaluated the participating entities as per the highest international standards. The standards included serving customers while meeting their needs, distinguished social contributions, excellent media presence, and more.

During December 2017, Zain proudly received four titles as part of the fifth Advertising Creativity Award. The award, organized by the Arab Media Forum, recognized Zain's achievements in the Influence Category Award for Zain's Ramadan 2017 TVC, the National Campaigns Category Award for Zain's Kuwait National Day 2017 TVC, the Direction Category

Award for Zain's Eid 2017 TVC, as well as the Public Relations and Corporate Sustainability Creativity Award for the company's long-list of initiatives and programs launched during 2017.

Zain's sponsorship of Kuwait's Public Relations and Customer Service Prize for the third consecutive year showcases its distinguished PR and media involvement, and

further strengthens the company's role as a leading private sector company launching several public relations and marketing campaigns all year round. Zain will continue supporting this very important field which carries significant and informative messaging to the public at large and the communications world as a whole, whether through traditional or modern media tools.



Joyalukkas Salalah, Oman showroom, inaugurated by Sheikh Nizar Ahmed Al Marhoon, Chairman of Al Haddadh Club along with Manpreet Singh, Chairman, Indian Social Club, John Paul Alukkas, Executive Director, Joyalukkas Group. Also present were local dignitaries, VIPs and chief executives of the Joyalukkas Group.

Joyalukkas opens latest showroom in Salalah, Oman

The world's favourite jeweller makes a dazzling new addition to the lush and thriving city of Salalah with its latest showroom. The much anticipated launch is part of the global jewellery chain's massive global expansion plans.

The showroom was inaugurated by Sheikh Nizar Ahmed Al Marhoon, Chairman of Al Haddadh Club along Manpreet Singh, Chairman, Indian Social Club, John Paul Alukkas, Executive Director, Joyalukkas Group.

Also present were local dignitaries, VIPs and chief executives of the Joyalukkas Group.

Joyalukkas Salalah will feature the brand's signature bright, spacious interiors and open display design showcasing a world-class selection of a million designs in gold, diamond, polki, pearl, precious and semiprecious stone jewellery.

It will also showcase new lines of gold and diamond jewellery to be launched across all Joyalukkas

showrooms within the first quarter of 2018.

"Beautiful Salalah is the perfect backdrop for our signature jewellery showroom," said John Paul Alukkas, Executive Director of Joyalukkas Group. "It is a great pleasure for us to open our latest showroom here and we have the support of the people of Oman to thank for this opportunity. We look forward to continuing to grow in this wonderful country and offering the pure joy of jewellery shopping only Joyalukkas can offer to its residents and visitors."

Joyalukkas Salalah will showcase jewellery designs in a mix of traditional, ethno contemporary and international influences. It will carry an exclusive line of Joyalukkas brands, such as Veda Temple Jewellery, Pride Diamonds, Eleganza Polki Diamonds, Masaaki Pearls, Zenina Turkish Jewellery, Li'l Joy Kids Jewellery, the Apurva Antique collection and Ratna Precious Stone Jewellery.

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EQUATE posts \$1.13b net profit, up 66% y/y

EBITDA up 47% to \$1.73bn in 2017

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: EQUATE Group, a global petrochemical producer, reported its 2017 financial results. The Group reported an EBITDA of \$1.73 billion, up 47 percent from last year, and a net profit of \$1.13 billion for 2017, up by 66 percent from the previous year. The EQUATE Group combines the Kuwait-based EQUATE Petrochemical Company and its subsidiaries, and The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC). The earnings mark the second year since EQUATE's acquisition of MEGlobal, a manufacturer of Ethylene Glycol (EG).



Ramesh Ramachandran, EQUATE President and CEO.

EQUATE Group's President and CEO, Dr Ramesh Ramachandran, said, "2017 was one of our best year where our people delivered on all fronts. The results were primarily driven by a rebounding EG price, new customer optimization in our Polyethylene (PE) portfolio, and a strong recovery in our Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET) business in Europe.

vancements and set stronger foundations for the Group's continued growth."

The year 2017 was indeed a milestone year. We maintained our leadership position as the second largest producer of EG globally, with an EG production of over 2.5 million metric tons. This market leadership will be further strengthened next year with an additional 750,000 MT in EG capacity as our new US Gulf Coast (USGC) facility comes on line.

The EQUATE Group is a global producer of petrochemicals and the world's second largest producer of Ethylene Glycol (EG). The Group has industrial complexes in Kuwait, North America and Europe that annually produce over 5 million tons of Ethylene, EG, Polyethylene (PE) and Polyethylene Terephthalate (PET). The products are marketed throughout Asia, the Americas, Europe, the Middle East and Africa. The EQUATE Group's shareholders include Petrochemical Industries Company (PIC), The Dow Chemical Company (Dow), Boubyan Petrochemical Company (BPC) and Qurain Petrochemical Industries Company (QPIC). The Group is a leading enterprise that pursues sustainability wherever it operates through partnerships in fields that include the environment, economy and society. www.equate.com.

From safe and reliable operations to record-breaking conversion efficiencies, relentless focus on our fixed costs and a solid marketing platform across the globe, in 2017 EQUATE made great ad-

The EQUATE Group includes EQUATE Petrochemical Company (EQUATE), its subsidiaries and The Kuwait Olefins Company (TKOC).

The Group has an investment-grade rating of Baa2 from Moody's and BBB+ from Standard & Poor's.

QNB raises \$1 bln with private bond

DUBAI, Feb 5, (RTRS): Qatar National Bank, the Gulf's largest bank, has issued \$1 billion in privately placed bonds arranged by Bank of America Merrill Lynch, sources familiar with the matter said.

Australian dollar-denominated "Kangaroo" bond, raising A\$700 million (\$555.52 million) with maturities of five and 10 years.

The bond, which has a two-year maturity, was sold to a single investor, the sources added.

It also sold a \$720 million, 30-year Formosa bond, which is a note sold by foreign issuers in Taiwan in currencies other than the Taiwanese dollar.

QNB did not respond to a request for comment.

Banking sources said QNB could potentially issue a public U.S. dollar-denominated bond this year - which would be its first since the beginning of the diplomatic crisis - but only after an international bond sale by the Qatari government, which could take place as early as in the first quarter of this year.

The Qatari lender has recently tapped different forms of financing as it aims to diversify funding resources amid an ongoing regional diplomatic rift that started in June last year.

Last month it issued its first

Award confirms bank's leadership role in digital innovation: Sfikas

NBK honored with CIO 100 Awards by CNME

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Digital innovation has become a critical component of modern banking and at the forefront, leading this development in the Middle East, stands National Bank of Kuwait. NBK's innovative digital solutions are reshaping banking at a time when more and more customers are seeking digital options for their daily personal and business banking needs.

The award was presented to Mr Yousef Al Kateefi, Executive Manager who received the award on behalf of the NBK Group Information Technology.

safer and more efficient digital financial solutions but also that our industry peers value what we are doing."

"Winning the CIO 100 Award cements NBK's leadership role in digital innovation," said Nikolas Sfikas, NBK's Group CIO. "It confirms that we are not only on the right path, building stronger,

"NBK leads the way in developing innovative Fintech solutions with a customer-centric approach," added "We are delighted to recognize and honor NBK's contribution to these important developments in the Fintech sector and in technology in the Middle East."

tor and in technology in the Middle East."

CNME was established more than two decades ago and enjoys a readership of 75,000 readers per month with a focus on IT issues and news of local relevance, business benefit and technology for decision makers.

National Bank of Kuwait continues to develop award-winning digital and financial products and services.

Its newly redesigned and rebuilt website, NBK.com won the notable Web Marketing Association (WMA) 2017 WebAward for 'Bank Standard of Excellence'. NBK was honored specifically for the website's mobile-responsive and innovative design.

NBK's Tap & Pay card and wearables are another strong example of the bank's push for innovative digital solutions that meet the lifestyle needs of today's customers.

Customers can learn more about NBK Tap & Pay and other products and services by visiting NBK.com.



Yousef Al Kateefi



Nikolas Sfikas

BUSINESS

Waymo lawyer tells US jury Uber 'cheating' on autonomous car secrets

Uber was so driven to "win at all costs" in the race to develop self-driving vehicles that it cheated, a Waymo lawyer told a jury on Monday, the opening salvo in a trade-secrets lawsuit between the two technology companies that could help determine who emerges in the forefront of the autonomous car business.

On the first day of an expected two weeks of testimony before a 10-person jury in San Francisco

federal court, Waymo lawyer Charles Verhoeven said the case "is about two competitors where one competitor decided they needed to win at all costs. Losing was not an option."

The competitive pressures were so great to develop self-driving cars in 2015 that the then Chief Executive of ride-hailing firm Uber Technologies Inc, Trevor Kalanick, decided that "winning was more important than obeying the law,"

Verhoeven said.

"We're bringing this case because Uber is cheating. They took our technology ... to win this race at all costs," Verhoeven told the jury on behalf of Waymo, Alphabet Inc's self-driving car unit.

A lawyer for Uber will make an opening statement later on Monday, Waymo sued Uber nearly a year ago, sparking a showdown between the two technology companies over allegations by Waymo

that one of its former engineers took trade secrets just before quitting and going to work at Uber.

The jury will have to decide whether these were indeed trade secrets and not common knowledge, and whether Uber improperly acquired them, used them and benefited from them.

Uber has said while Levandowski downloaded the files, the data never made their way into its own self-driving car designs. (RTRS)

Nissan to invest \$9.5 bln in China

Japanese automaker Nissan Motor and its Chinese joint venture partner announced on Monday a \$9.5 billion investment plan in China to increase annual sales by one million vehicles and boost electric car production.

Dongfeng Motor Company is the latest Sino-foreign car company to splash out as China rolls out new regulations to limit gas vehicles and boost production of electric cars in coming years.

Nissan's high-end brand, Infiniti, will go all electric in China by 2025, according to the plan.

The company provided few specifics on the investment plan, saying the money would go into several areas, from manufacturing to human resources. The automaker sold 1.5 million vehicles in China last year, and said it plans to sell 2.6 million vehicles by 2022, when revenue is expected to hit 300 billion yuan (\$47.6 billion). (AFP)

US tax overhaul could see \$2 trillion repatriated: UN

Global FDI hit

GENEVA, Feb 5, (AFP): The recent US tax overhaul could prompt US multinationals to repatriate around \$2.0 trillion (1.6 trillion euros), making a significant impact on global foreign direct investment, the UN said Monday.

The forecast from the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD) came just over a month after US President Donald Trump signed into law a sweeping and controversial overhaul of the US tax code, offering dramatic tax cuts for corporations and temporary reductions for individuals.

In its annual report on trends in foreign direct investment (FDI) — a measure of cross-border private sector investments — UNCTAD warned that the US tax reform package would have "significant implications for global FDI patterns over the coming years."

The tax overhaul "will affect the multinationals and their affiliates," James Zhan, who heads UNCTAD's investment and enterprise division, told reporters in Geneva.

He said the affected multinationals account for nearly half of the some \$26 trillion in current FDI stock, which measures the total level of global direct investments at a given point.

"The reform (could) lead to the repatriation of almost \$2.0 trillion of returned earnings," Zhan said, referring to the amount of easily-repatriated FDI cash US multinationals are estimated to be holding abroad.

The new tax bill, which slashes the corporate tax rate to 21 percent from 35 percent previously, could entice some businesses to return with the promise of higher profits.

UNCTAD said the US move could lead to increased global tax competition. "Over the longer term we may see that the US tax reform will trigger tax reforms worldwide," Zhan said.

But according to UNCTAD's analysis, the most significant change in the US tax regime for multinationals is a

Eurozone businesses began year in best shape for over a decade

UK economy suffers sharp slowdown at start of 2018

LONDON, Feb 5, (RTRS): Britain's economy slowed sharply in January, according to a survey that cast doubt on growing expectations among investors that the Bank of England (BoE) might be gearing up to raise interest rates again in the coming months.

Sterling fell and British government bonds briefly rose after financial data firm IHS Markit said Monday that the world's sixth-biggest economy looked set to slow to 0.3 percent in the first quarter, down from 0.5 percent in the last three months of 2017.

The slowdown was driven mostly by Britain's dominant services sector, where activity growth fell to a 16-month low of 53.0 last month from 54.2 in December, as measured by IHS Markit's Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI).

By contrast, eurozone businesses began 2018 with their strongest growth in well over a decade, IHS Markit said — figures that highlighted the gap between Britain, as it heads for Brexit, and its European neighbours.

Combined with weaker-than-expected surveys last week for Britain's manufacturing and construction sectors, Monday's report suggested the country grew last month at its slowest pace since just after the 2016 referendum vote to leave the EU.

Eurozone businesses began 2018 by increasing activity faster than at any time in well over a decade as new orders surged despite firms raising prices at the steepest rate in almost seven years, the survey showed.

The eurozone emerged as one of

shift away from a worldwide system, in which income earned around the globe was taxed, but was only payable when funds were repatriated to the United States.

Under the new territorial system, where Washington only taxes income earned in the United States and is offering multinationals to pay a one-off tax on accumulated foreign income, the companies have much less incentive to hoard their foreign-made income outside

Tide turns against web giants

Amazon hammers out tax deal with France

PARIS, Feb 5, (AFP): US online retailer Amazon said Monday that it has settled a major tax claim in France and will start declaring all its earnings in the country in a response to building European pressure on the digital economy giants.

Amazon did not reveal how much it had paid over a French claim for nearly 200 million euros (\$249 million) covering the period from 2006 to 2010.

It is one of several American technology giants in the line of fire in Europe over their tax-avoidance strategies, which often sees them route their income through low-tax nations — in Amazon's case, Luxembourg.

French President Emmanuel Ma-

cron has proposed a new mechanism for taxing US tech companies that would take into account the volume of sales generated in each European country, rather than on the profits that are booked through low-tax jurisdictions.

Amazon announced a similar tax settlement deal with Italy in December, paying 100 million euros to settle an investigation into suspected tax evasion from 2011 to 2015, while also agreeing to declare its income locally.

In 2012, Amazon revealed that it had been hit with a 198-million-euro tax bill in France for back taxes, interest and penalties relating to income spread between different jurisdictions.

At the time, the company had

December's 58.1 and up from the flash estimate of 58.6.

It is now at its highest since June 2006 and well above the 50 mark that separates growth from contraction.

"The optimism reflects the strong economic upturn that the eurozone is experiencing, which continues to be broad-based and is set to continue in the months ahead," said Bert Colijn at ING.

About one quarter of US FDI stock is in developing countries, but most of that has been invested in productive assets, and is therefore not easily available in cash form, UNCTAD said.

Offshore financial centres in places like the Netherlands, Britain, Luxembourg and Bermuda, where US FDI stock is stored in cash, would likely see the biggest drain, it added.

While repatriating that cash would likely have little impact on projects in

said it disagreed with the French assessment and vowed to "vigorously" fight it.

In its statement Monday, Amazon said it had created a French subsidiary for its European operations in August 2015, "with all retail revenues, expenses, profits and taxes due now accounted for in France."

The retailer also said it had invested over 2 billion euros in France since 2010, creating more than 5,500 jobs.

European officials have vowed to make the digital economy giants known as GAFA — Google, Amazon, Facebook and Apple — pay a greater share of their taxes in the countries where they earn their profits.

"Backlogs of work are increasing, job creation is historically very strong and new orders continue to pour in. This makes for a rosy growth outlook."

Earlier figures from Germany, Europe's biggest economy, showed private sector growth was at a near seven-year high while in France the business boom showed no sign of abating in January.

The short term, "longer term it would reduce FDI outward stock, which means the investible funds for the future ... is reduced," Zhan warned.

It also remains uncertain how the repatriated funds would be used in the United States.

The 2005 tax break has been criticised for creating a windfall for multinationals and their shareholders without leading to significant increases in capital spending or jobs, UNCTAD said.

Market struggling to find equilibrium: expert

World bond market rout pauses; yields dip

LONDON, Feb 5, (RTRS): Long-term borrowing costs in Germany, the eurozone's biggest economy, pulled back from around two-year highs on Monday as bond investors paused for thought after a sharp sell-off prompted by fears about resurgent inflation.

Friday's US payrolls report showed wages growing at their fastest pace in more than 8-1/2 years, fuelling expectations of both higher inflation and more interest-rate rises from the US Federal Reserve than previously anticipated.

US and German 10-year bond yields hit fresh multi-year highs in early European trade on Monday. But without fresh impetus the momentum fizzled, allowing bond yields to pull back.

In addition, ECB President Mario Draghi warned in a speech that currency market volatility may prove an obstacle for inflation, remarks that potentially kept yields lower as well.

"The market is still struggling to find an equilibrium and particularly to assess the upside for yields," said Commerzbank rates strategist Michael Leister.

"Bond yields are fairly close to 0.80 percent ... a key factor in the market. Most of the recent moves were driven by the US, with Treasury yields trading at almost 2.90 percent, with at least probably some marginal willingness on behalf of investors to scale into the market again at those levels."

German 10-year Bund yields fell 2 bps to 0.74 percent, off almost 2-1/2 year highs of 0.774 percent hit in early trade. German 30-year bond yields were flat having touched two-year highs earlier at 1.429 percent.

Two-year bond yields were down slightly on the day, leaving the German curve out to 10 years at its steepest since mid-2014. US 10-year Treasury yields fell away from 4-year highs at around 2.84 percent.

Still, analysts said sentiment towards bond markets was likely to remain bearish especially as investors ratchet up expectations for US rate rises this year.

"The average earnings data from the US was strong enough to suggest the bearish sentiment will not dissipate soon," said Richard McGuire, head of rates strategy at Rabobank.

Futures markets price in the risk of three, or even more, interest rate rises from the Fed this year. Just a few weeks ago they had anticipated around two rate hikes this year.

Bond markets across the world have started 2018 on a weak footing as



A flyer of Al Danah daily draws

Al Danah daily draw

Gulf Bank announces draw winners

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Gulf Bank held its Al Danah daily draws on 4 February 2018 announcing the names of its winners for the week of 21 January – 25 January 2018. The Al Danah daily draws include draws every working day for two prizes of KD 1,000 per winner.

The winners were:
(Sunday 28/01): Bashair Nawaf Ghanim Ali, Saad Sadeq Alhaj Hasan Saad

(Monday 29/01): Waleed Abdulaziz Mohammed Al-Shiha, Faisal Faleh Ayed Al-Subaiei

(Tuesday 30/01): Teibah Ahmed Mohammed Habib, Ali Abdullah Mohammed Al-Saffar

(Wednesday 31/01): Omar Yousef Eid Ismaeil, Ali Ahmad Ali Khameis (Thursday 01/02): Shabana Bagwala Shabbir Hussain, Habib Salah Habib Al-Qattan

Gulf Bank's Al Danah 2018 draw lineup includes daily draws (2 winners per working day each receive KD 1,000), Al Danah's 1st Quarterly draw for the prize of KD 200,000 will be held on 28 March, the 2nd Quarterly draw for the prize of KD 250,000 will be held on 27 June and the 3rd Quarterly Draw for

the prize of KD 500,000 will be held on Sept 26. The final Al Danah draw for 1 Million Kuwaiti Dinars will be held on 10 January, 2019 whereby the Al Danah Millionaire will be announced.

Gulf Bank encourages you to increase your chances by depositing more into your Al Danah account, immediately from any local bank, using the new ePay (Self-Pay) service, which is available on Gulf Bank's Online and Mobile Banking.

Five reasons why the Al Danah account is the Best:

- 1) Kuwait's single biggest yearly cash prize of KD 1 million and the largest international bank prize according to Guinness World Records
- 2) Kuwait's biggest quarterly cash prizes, up to KD 500,000
- 3) Two winners of KD 1,000 every working day
- 4) The most chances to win
- 5) Only bank that transfers your chances to win from the previous year to the current year

Only Al Danah Makes Millionaires. Al Danah also offers a number of unique services including: the Al Danah Deposit Only ATM card which helps

account holders deposit their money at their convenience; as well as the Al Danah calculator to help customers calculate their chances of becoming an Al Danah winner.

Gulf Bank's Al Danah account is open to Kuwaiti and non-Kuwaiti residents of Kuwait. Customers require a minimum of KD 200 to open an account and the same amount must be maintained as for customers to be eligible for the upcoming Al Danah draws. If the customer's account balance falls below KD 200 at any given time, a KD 2 charge will be made on a monthly basis to the account until the minimum balance is met. Customers who open an account and/ or deposit more will enter the daily draw within two days. To take part in the Al Danah 2018 upcoming quarterly and yearly draws, customers must meet the required hold period for each draw; customers can visit one of Gulf Bank's 57 branches, transfer on line, or call the Customer Contact Center on 1805805 for assistance and guidance. Customers can also log on to www.e-gulfbank.com/aldanahwinners, to find out more about Al Danah and its winners.

tight the tone for eurozone peers, said analysts, with many expecting 10-year Treasury yields to test 3 percent soon.

Average pay up 3 pct

Rise in number of US states showing wage growth in 2017

OAKLAND, California/CANTON, New York/WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (RTRS): The kind of pay raises for which American workers have waited years are now here for a broadening swath of the country, according to a Reuters analysis of state-by-state data that suggests falling unemployment has finally begun boosting wages.

Average pay rose by more than 3 percent in at least half of US states last year, up sharply from previous years. The data also shows a jump in 2017 in the number of states where the jobless rate zeroed in on record lows, 10 years after the financial crisis knocked the economy into a historic recession.

The state-level data could signal an inflection point muffled by national statistics.

Over the past four years, the US economy added 10 million jobs and the overall unemployment rate fell to its lowest level since 2000. Yet wages have disappointed.

The disconnect has puzzled economists at the Federal Reserve, frustrated politicians concerned about rising inequality, and held regular Americans back, even as businesses have benefited and stock markets have surged, particularly in the first year of US President Donald Trump's presidency.

Trump says his tax cuts and regulation rollbacks are lifting business sentiment, and in an upbeat address to Congress on Tuesday, he said Americans "are finally seeing rising wages" after "years and years" of stagnation.

Indeed, average hourly earnings were up 2.9 percent in January year-on-year, the biggest rise in more than 8-1/2 years but still less than the 3.5 percent to 4 percent economists say would be a sign of a healthy economy.

The Reuters analysis and interviews with businesses across the country do show wage increases in industries ranging from manufacturing to technology and retail. Executives are mixed, however, on how much to credit Trump after several years of job growth that has chopped nearly six percentage points from the unemployment rate since its peak of 10 percent at the height of the 2007-2009 recession.

"Everyone in the building knows

that they can leave and make more money," said Michael Frazer, president of Frazer Computing, which provides software to US used-car dealers from its offices in northern New York state. In response he raised wages by 6.1 percent at the end of 2017, up from 3.7 percent the previous year.

In Portland, Oregon, software provider Zaproved now hires coding school graduates and spends up to three months training them because the experienced software developers it used to hire have become too expensive. And still, CEO Monica Enand says she gives her developers twice-yearly raises "to make sure we are in the market for pay." The Reuters analysis of the most recent data available found that in half of the 50 states, average hourly pay rose by more than 3 percent last year. That's up from 17 states in 2016, 12 in 2015, and 3 in 2014. Average weekly pay rose in 30 states, also up sharply from prior years, the analysis showed.

Unemployment rates are near or at record lows in 17 states, including New York, up from just five in 2016, the Reuters analysis shows.

"Wage growth tends to accelerate when the unemployment rate gets really strong," said Bart Hobijn, an economics professor at Arizona State University.

California, Arkansas, and Oregon were among those both notching 3-percent-plus wage gains and plumbing record-low unemployment rates. This broadening of benefits to US workers comes as robust global growth pushes up wages from Germany to Japan.

New York Fed President William Dudley said last month that firmer wage gains in states with lower unemployment rates gave him confidence that US inflation, long stubbornly low, would soon rise.

In California, home of Noah's New York Bagels, more than half of its 53 stores now pay their new hires more than the legal minimum wage, twice as many as in mid-2017.

"It's very challenging to find enough people" in low-unemployment areas like the San Francisco Bay Area, said Noah's president Tyler Ricks, who expects to hike pay further this year even as he opens five new stores.

BUSINESS

China hits back US

China has launched an anti-dumping investigation into sorghum imports from the United States, spurring worries of a brewing tit-for-tat trade war between the world's top two economies.

The commerce ministry announced the self-initiated probe on Sunday, just weeks after President Donald Trump's administration slapped its latest batch of tariffs on Chinese goods.

The ministry did not immediately announce any new tariffs on the grain, though, and the results of the dumping investigation are not expected until next February. (AFP)

Egypt's non-oil business sector activity stabilises in Jan — PMI

Egypt's non-oil private sector business activity stabilised in January after a slump the previous month, with an overall positive outlook thanks to tough economic reforms, a survey showed.

The Emirates NBD Egypt Purchasing Managers' Index (PMI) for the non-oil private sector rose to 49.9 in January from 48.3 in December, remaining just below the 50 mark that separates growth from contraction.

"While Egypt's headline PMI reading remained just shy of the 50.0 neutral mark in January, the signs are encouraging as we begin 2018," Daniel Richards, MENA Economist at Emirates NBD, said.

"A pick-up in new export orders in particular stands as an indication that the difficult economic reforms enacted in late 2016 are starting to pay off," he said.

New export orders expanded in

January thanks mainly to greater demand for Egyptian goods and services from international markets, the survey said.

Egyptian exports have gained new markets since the central bank liberalized the exchange rate in November 2016 as part of a \$12 billion International Monetary Fund reform programme. The pound lost half its value after the float.

Non-oil business activity grew for

the first time in 25 months in November, with a similar survey attributing the growth to the IMF-linked reforms.

The economy has been struggling to recover since a 2011 uprising scared tourists and investors away, two main sources of foreign currency.

The recent reforms have hit Egyptians hard, however, affecting purchasing power with a much weaker Egyptian pound. (RTRS)

Pivot to Asia comes amid worsening relations with West

Europe shuns Russian oil as boost of Chinese flows hits quality

China's service sector expands at fastest pace in nearly 6 yrs in Jan

PMI reinforces views Beijing's economic momentum remains resilient

BEIJING, Feb 5, (RTRS): China's services sector got off to a flying start in 2018, expanding at its fastest pace in almost six years as new orders surged and companies rushed to hire more staff, a private survey showed on Monday.

Economists also attributed the robust strength in services in January to better access to bank loans at the start of the year and solid demand before the long Lunar New Year celebrations, which fall in mid-February.

The Caixin/Markit services purchasing managers' index (PMI) rose to 54.7 in January from December's 53.9, marking the highest reading since May 2012.

The 50-mark separates growth from contraction on a monthly basis.

The upbeat findings, which echoed those of an official gauge of the non-manufacturing sector last week, bode well for Beijing's longer-term goal of overhauling and modernizing its economic growth model.

The government is counting on growth in consumption and services, particularly in high value-added areas such as finance and technology, to reduce the economy's traditional reliance on heavy industry, investment and exports.

The services sector already accounts for over half of China's economy, with rising wages giving its consumers more spending power at home and abroad.

New business increased at the fastest pace in 32 months, the Caixin survey showed, with respondents linking the rise to new projects, company expansions and greater initiatives to win new clients.

The effort led companies to hire new workers at the fastest pace in five months.

Better access to financing likely also played a role in the sharp improvement in business conditions, some analysts said. The survey focuses on small and medium-sized firms which traditionally tend to have a tougher time securing funds than their larger state-owned peers.

"Banks normally dole out more credit at the start of the year, as opposed to being restrained by the lending quota last year," said Wendy Chen, a Shanghai-based economist at Nomura.



A man walks past an electronic board showing Hong Kong share index outside a local bank in Hong Kong, on Feb 5. Asian shares opened sharply lower on Monday, extending global stock losses after Wall Street's big selloff as investor anxiety grows over rising bond yields and disappointing quarterly earnings. (AP)

S. Korea says North stole virtual currency worth billions of won last yr

China looks to stamp out cryptocurrency trading

BEIJING, Feb 5, (Agencies): China plans to stamp out all remaining cryptocurrency trading in the country by blocking access to overseas-based websites and removing related applications from app stores.

The moves were outlined in a report Sunday by Financial News, a publication under the People's Bank of China, which said the aim was to snuff out the "dying cinders" of cryptocurrency trading and initial coin offerings "which are glowing once more".

Faced with Chinese citizens who continue to trade cryptocurrency on platforms operated beyond the country's reach, or take part in initial coin offerings, authorities will "ratchet up oversight in a sustained manner", the report said. After launching a campaign last year, authorities eliminated most

cryptocurrency trading in the country. China's share of trading plummeted from 90 percent of the world to less than one percent, the report said.

That crackdown sent Chinese cryptocurrency traders to overseas platforms operated in Hong Kong and Japan, beyond Beijing's reach. The latest regulatory moves aim to cut off access to them. Financial regulators will work with telecommunications regulators to shut down websites and mobile apps offering trading in illegal initial coin offerings, the report said.

Regulators will also take unspecified action against websites of foreign and domestic cryptocurrency trading platforms.

Also:
SEOUL: South Korea said on Monday

that North Korea last year stole cryptocurrency from the South worth billions of won and that it was still trying to hack into its exchanges.

"North Korea sent emails that could hack into cryptocurrency exchanges and their customers' private information and stole (cryptocurrency) worth billions of won," said Kim Byung-kee, a member of South Korea's parliamentary intelligence committee.

Kim did not disclose which exchanges were hacked.

He added that the country's spy agency assumed that North Korea was continuously trying to hack into exchanges to steal cryptocurrency and that it was trying its best to prevent further hacking.

MOSCOW, Feb 5, (RTRS): European refiners are threatening to cut Russian oil purchases due to worsening quality after Moscow has re-routed large volumes of crude to China as part of its fight with OPEC and the United States for market share in fast growing Asian markets.

The quality of Russia's flagship Urals oil grade has deteriorated so much that multiple buyers are reviewing how much they buy and the price they are willing to pay for it, according to traders and sources close to European refiners.

Russia has forged closer ties with energy-hungry China at a time of chilling relations with the West over Moscow's role in Ukrainian crisis and allegations of its interference in foreign elections, accusations denied by the Kremlin.

Mirosław Kochalski, vice-president of PKN Orlen, Poland's biggest refiner, told Reuters in an interview that the changing quality of the Urals his company buys could influence future deals. "It opens room for negotiations with partners, also regarding price conditions," Kochalski said.

According to the industry sources who spoke to Reuters, that position is shared by others in the industry who buy Urals crude.

The Russian energy ministry and oil pipeline monopoly Transneft both acknowledge the problem of weak Urals quality.

The Urals oil that reaches customers in Europe is a blend of different sources of oil, with the mixing taking place inside Russia's pipeline system. The quality depends on the relative proportions of higher-quality and lower-quality darker oils in the mix.

Data on Urals chemical composi-

tion, obtained by Reuters from industry sources, showed the oil exported to Europe this month is near the bottom end of the quality range allowed under a standard set by Russia's state standards agency Rosstandart.

The trading sources said they track the quality via documents that accompany cargos of crude pumped from Russia.

The worsening of Urals quality has dampened its price and prompted buyers to think about the possibility of reducing the volumes they buy, according to the traders and sources close to European refineries.

"We can't refine this (oil)," a trader at a European company said. "There is only one way out, which is to cut Urals purchases and get supplies of lighter grades for blending."

At least five traders said they believed Urals was being affected because better-quality types of oil that would previously have been mixed into Urals were being diverted instead eastwards and incorporated into the ESPO blend exported to China and other Asian markets.

"For now, Russia produces most of its light sweet barrels to supply China, while Western buyers have to receive what is left over," an industry source told Reuters.

Russia's energy ministry acknowledged that the quality of Urals had been declining for the past several years, but said that was due to the depletion of old oilfields.

Russian oil pipeline monopoly Transneft also said quality had been declining. But a spokesman, Igor Dyomin, said no customers have complained about the quality to date, and that the quality was within the permissible range.

President of IATA warns about rising cost of airport expansion

SINGAPORE, Feb 5, (AFP): The "sky-rocketing" costs of expanding airport infrastructure must be controlled to keep flight tickets affordable, the boss of airline industry group IATA warned Monday.

Alexandre de Juniac called for more modest developments to keep construction costs down and avoid landing customers with higher prices which would hit demand.

De Juniac cited the proposed 14 billion pound (\$19.8 billion) cost of a third runway at London's Heathrow Airport and the construction of a fifth terminal at Changi Airport in Singapore as prime examples of vastly expensive projects.

"The cost of infrastructure is skyrocketing," he told reporters ahead of the Singapore Airshow this week.

"When we look at the numbers of Heathrow for the third runway, we are very, very, very worried. Even the numbers for T5 in Singapore are very high," he added, without disclosing a figure for Changi Airport's expansion.

The city-state's plans for its hub airport include a new development due to open next year featuring a 131 foot (40 metre) high indoor waterfall, and a fifth terminal slated for 2030.

"We would like for instance to avoid big projects in which we see overruns because the architecture is fantastic, wonderful but it's very costly... we have to be more modest," De Juniac said without naming any airport.

Airport construction costs are rising to levels which are too much for airlines to bear, he added.

"Someone will have to pay for that... They will have to put that on the tickets, and then if it's too high it could harm the level of demand," he said.

IATA is working with authorities at Heathrow and Changi to manage costs and called on governments to involve airlines from the beginning of projects.

Heathrow has proposed trimming expansion costs by 2.5 billion pounds with measures such as building a sloping runway and staging construction.

investment funds

Funds	Fund Manager	Valuation	Valued date	Currency	Net Asset Value (NAV)	Prev NAV	Prev NAV Dated	Funds	Fund Manager	Valuation	Valued date	Currency	Net Asset Value (NAV)	Prev NAV	Prev NAV Dated
National Bank of Kuwait								Kuwait & Middle East Financial & Inv. Co.							
Money Market Funds	Watani KD Money Market Fund II	NBK Capital	Weekly	Jan 30, 2018	KD	1.036	1.036	AI Rou'yah Fund	KMEFIC	Monthly	Nov 30, 2017	KD	1.359	1.487	Sept 30, 2017
	Watani USD Money Market Fund	NBK Global Asset Management Co. Ltd.	Weekly	Jan 30, 2018	USD	10.291	10.286								
	Watani KD Money Market Fund (Acc to Islamic Shariah principles) II	NBK Global Asset Management Co. Ltd.	Weekly	Jan 30, 2018	KD	1.035	1.035								
	Watani USD Money Market Fund (Acc to Islamic Shariah principles) II	NBK Global Asset Management Co. Ltd.	Weekly	Jan 30, 2018	USD	10.135	10.131								
	NBK Kuwait Equity Fund	Watani Investment Co.	Weekly	Jan 25, 2018	KD	0.877	0.872								
	Gulf Equity Investment Fund	Watani Investment Co.	Weekly	Jan 25, 2018	USD	11.800	11.490								
Regional Bond and Sukuk Investment Fund	NBK Capital	Weekly	Jan 25, 2018	USD	10.035	10.045									
Gulf Bank								Kuwait Finance & Investment Co (KFIC)							
	AI Basha'er GCC Equity Fund	Kwt. Fin. & Inv. Co. & Gulf Fin. House	Monthly	Jan 31, 2018	USD	7.246	7.026	AI Wasm Fund	KFIC	Weekly	Jan 10, 2018	KD	0.428	0.416	Nov 30, 2017
	Coast Fund	Coast Investment & Dev. Co.	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.646	0.667	AI Basha'er GCC Equity Fund	KFIC	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	USD	7.026	6.929	Nov 30, 2017
	Markaz Real Estate Fund		Bi-annual	Jan 31, 2018	KD	1.376	1.375								
AI Ahli Bank								KAMCO							
	AI Ahli Gulf Fund	AI Ahli Bank	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.851	0.874								
	AI Ahli Kuwaiti Fund	AI Ahli Bank	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.827	0.856								
Burgan Bank								Wafra International Investment Co.							
	Burgan Equity Fund	Burgan Bank	Monthly	Jan 2, 2018	KD	1.071	1.117	KAMCO Investment Fund	KAMCO	Monthly	Nov 30, 2017	KD	1.110	1.163	Oct 31, 2017
								KAMCO Real Estate Yield Fund	KAMCO		Dec 31, 2017	USD	10.090	10.090	Oct 31, 2017
Boubyan Bank								AI Aman Investment							
	Boubyan KD Money Market Fund	Boubyan Bank	Weekly	Jan 30, 2018	KD	1.072	1.071	Wafra Equity Fund	Wafra Co.	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.921	0.908	Nov 30, 2017
	Boubyan KD Money Market Fund II	Boubyan Bank	Weekly	Jan 30, 2018	KD	1.019	1.018	Wafra Bond Fund	Wafra Co.	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	1.024	1.003	Nov 30, 2017
								Masaref Investment Fund	ISKAN	Weekly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.866	0.848	Nov 30, 2017
								Fajir Islamic Fund	Wafra Co.	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.690	0.681	Nov 30, 2017
Boubyan Capital Investment Co.								Tharwa Investment Co.							
	Boubyan USD Liquidity Fund	Boubyan Capital Investment Co		Jan 30, 2018	USD	10.291	10.286	AI Aman Islamic Fund	AI Aman Investment	Weekly	Dec 30, 2017	KD	0.316	0.315	Nov 30, 2017
	Boubyan Multi-Asset Holding Fund	Boubyan Bank		Jan 30, 2018	USD	10.975	10.980								
Kuwait Investment Co.								Bank Al-Bilad							
Local Fund	AI Raed Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Weekly	Jan 31, 2018	KD	1.045	1.069	Tharwa Investment Fund	Tharwa Investment Co	Weekly	Dec 21, 2017	KD	1.461	1.480	Oct 31, 2017
	Kuwait Investment Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Weekly	Dec 28, 2017	KD	0.739	0.710	Tharwa Islamic Fund	Tharwa Investment Co	Monthly	Dec 21, 2017	KD	0.603	0.619	Oct 31, 2017
	AI Hilal Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Monthly	Jan 29, 2018	KD	0.703	0.704								
	AI Altheer Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Weekly	Dec 30, 2017	KD	1.009	1.009								
	Global Bond Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Weekly	Jan 31, 2018	USD	26.550	26.470								
International	Diversified Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Weekly	Jan 31, 2018	USD	21.250	21.020	AI Seef Fund	Bank Al-Bilad	Daily	Jan 14, 2018	KD	0.430	0.410	Dec 24, 2017
	European Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Weekly	Dec 29, 2017	Euro	21.630	21.690								
	Pacific Equity Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Weekly	Jan 17, 2017	USD	34.880	34.310								
	North American Equity Fund	Kuwait Investment Co	Tw. Monthly	Dec 29, 2017	USD	19.390	19.250								
National Investment Co. (NIC)								Commercial International Bank							
	AI-Wataniya Fund	NIC	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.615	0.606	CIB Money Market Fund (Osoul)	CI Asset Management	Weekly	Jan 24, 2018	EGP	316.080	315.320	Jan 18, 2018
	AI-Darij Fund	NIC	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.351	0.349	CIB II Equity (Istithmar)	CI Asset Management	Weekly	Jan 24, 2018	EGP	198.710	192.020	Jan 18, 2018
	Mawarid Fund	NIC	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.570	0.457	CIB and Faisal Islamic AI Aman Hemaya	CI Asset Management	Weekly	Jan 24, 2018	EGP	107.390	103.050	Jan 18, 2018
	Zajji Fund	NIC	Monthly	Dec 31, 2017	KD	0.712	0.718	Thabatl	CI Asset Management	Weekly	Jan 2, 2018	EGP	194.870	189.000	Nov 3, 2017
	AI Mada Investment Fund	NIC	Weekly	Dec 31, 2017	USD	0.768	0.771	Takamol	CI Asset Management	Weekly	Jan 24, 2018	EGP	197.700	195.810	Jan 18, 2018
								Misir El Mostakbel	CI Asset Management	Weekly	Jan 24, 2018	EGP	175.110	170.220	Jan 14, 2018
										Weekly	Jan 21, 2018	EGP	27.080	26.600	Jan 18, 2018
Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz)								KFH Capital Investment Co.							
	Murtaz Fund	Kuwait Financial Center	Weekly	Jan 18, 2018	KD	4.284	4.266	Muthanna Islamic Index Fund (MUDX)	KFH Capital Investment Co	Daily	Nov 30, 2017	KD	0.374	0.405	Sept 30, 2017
	MIDAF	Kuwait Financial Center	Weekly	Jan 18, 2018	KD	3.288	3.266	Muthanna GCC Islamic banks Fund	KFH Capital Investment Co	Daily	Nov 30, 2017	KD	0.669	0.710	Sept 30, 2017
	Islamic Fund	Kuwait Financial Center	Weekly	Jan 18, 2018	KD	1.625	1.618	Baltak GCC Fund	KFH Capital Investment Co	Weekly	June 29, 2017	KD	0.930	0.916	Feb 28, 2017
	FORSA Financial Fund	Kuwait Financial Center	Monthly	Nov 30, 2017	KD	0.996	1.013								
	Real Estate Fund	Kuwait Financial Center	Monthly	Nov 30, 2017	KD	1.388	1.390	Noor Islamic Fund	Noor Financial Investment Co	Monthly	Nov 30, 2016	KD	0.374	0.405	Sept 30, 2015
Markaz Fixed Income Fund	Kuwait Financial Center	Monthly	Jan 18, 2018	USD	11.680	11.680									
Markaz MENA Islamic Fund	Kuwait Financial Center	Weekly	Jan 15, 2017	USD	10.070	10.740									
CapCorp Investment Co.								Noor Financial Investment Co.							
	CapCorp Local Fund	CapCorp Investment Company	Weekly	Sept 28, 2017	KD	1.000	0.991								

Qatargas outage to have minimal impact

The world’s biggest liquefied natural gas (LNG) exporter, Qatargas, shut one of its production units after an onshore gas leak last week but the issue is not expected to cause major supply disruptions for Asian buyers, said.

While any shipment delays could pressure Asia’s tightly balanced LNG spot market as a cold wave sweeps across three of the region’s biggest buyers, China, Japan and South Korea,

one Qatargas customer said so far there were no such signs. The affected unit, or train, primarily supplies Japan and was expected to stay offline until mid-February, market sources said. A Qatar-based source said an onshore gas leak occurred on Thursday night, without giving further details. The impact of the disruption could not be immediately determined but some sources said only

two cargoes would likely be affected, with Qatargas using production from its other trains to compensate. Qatargas did not respond to requests for comment. A source with a Japanese buyer said it had not been notified of any disruptions. “Maintenance shutdowns are normal,” the source said, adding that if the incident can be fixed within a reasonably short time, buyers would likely not be notified. (RTRS)

Kuwait’s equities head north; volume rebounds

Mabanee Co gains 8 fils; NBK drops

By John Mathews
Arab Times Staff

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Kuwait stocks swung into green on Monday snapping the two-day pullback. The price index , after a tame start, climbed 41.37 pts to 6712.21 points helped by select counters even as some of heavyweights sagged. The overall sentiment however was mixed.

The KSX 15 gauge dropped 5 pts to 935.42 points trimming the year’s losses to 21 points while weighted index fell 1 pts. The volume turnover meanwhile rose after three-day drop. 89.4 million shares changed hands – A 25.5 percent jump from the day before.

The sectors closed mostly in green. Technology outshone the rest with 14. pct jump whereas banks slipped 1.13 percent, the worst performer of the day. Volume wise, real estate mustered the highest market share of 50.7 pct and banks trailed with 21.6 percent contribution.

In the individual shares, sector bellwether National Bank of Kuwait slipped 8 fils to 736 fils after trading over 5 million shares while Gulf Bank gave up 3 fils. Jazeera Airways slid 18 fils to 630 fils and Kuwait Food Co (Americana) was down 10 fils at KD 1.045.

Zain shed 4 fils before closing at 459 fils and Ooredoo climbed 19 fils to KD 1.699 partly recouping Sunday’s losses. Kuwait Telecommunications Co (VIVA) took in 2 fils and Agility gave up 4 fils to wind up at 860 fils.

Burgan Bank eased 1 fil to 314 fils and Kuwait Finance House clipped 2 fils. The bank has registered a 10 pct rise in profits to KD 46.29 percent during Q4 , 2017 compared to the same period in 2016. In fiscal year 2017, profits was up 11.5 pct year-on-year to KD 184.16 million.

The market opened on a tame note and traded flat in early trade. The main index moved sideways well past the mid-session and slipped to the day’s lowest level of 6665 points. It rose sharply in the second half and closed with impressive gains.

Top gainer of the day, REAM rallied 17.6 pct to KD 1.000 and OSOS

climbed 15 percent to stand next. Metal and Recycling Co dived 15.5 pct, the steepest decliner of the day and Sokouk Holding topped the volume with 27.4 million shares.

Despite the day’s upswing, the losers outnumbered the winners. 40 stocks advanced whereas 57 closed lower. Of the 121 counters active on Monday, 24 closed flat. 3112 deals worth KD 10.9 million were transacted – a 22.3 percent rise in value from the day before.

National Industries Group was unchanged at 163 fils and Shuiaba Industrial too did not budge from its earlier close of 250 fils. Gulf Cable gained 20 fils and Equipment Holding Co dialed up 2 fils. NICBM was up 3fils at 197 fils.

Kuwait National Cinema Co gained 10 fils and Independent Petroleum Group was unchanged at 396 fils. Kuwait and Gulf Link Transport Co stood pat at 117 fils and KGL Logistics trimmed 0.1 fil. Mezzan Holding added 5 fils.

Paused

NAPESCO fell 5 fils to 805 fils and Humansoft Holding held ground at KD 3.700. KCPC rose 6 fils to 154 fils and Mashaer Holding dialed up 2 fils. Al Rai Media Group paused at 111 fils.

Boubyan Petrochemical Co climbed 8 fils and Al Qurain Petrochemical Co closed flat. The company posted a 10.2 pct rise in profits to KD 5.47 mln during the third quarter ended 31 Dec, 2017 from same period last year. During the nine months ended on 31 Dec, the profits fell 3.3 pct to KD 16.03 m from 9M, 2016.

Automated Systems Co jumped 18 fils and ALAFCO gave up 5 fils. The profit soared 49.6 pct to KD 7.78 million during the first quarter ended on 31 December 2017 from the same period a year ago. The growth in profits is attributed to the purchase of 11 aircrafts in 2017, besides KD 1.6 million profit from selling an aircraft.

In the banking sector. Al Mutehad fell 2 fils to 347 fils while Kuwait International Bank eased 1 fil to 225 fils. Boubyan Bank dialed down 2 fils while Warba Bank stood pat at 222 fils. Commercial Bank and Al Ahli Bank were not traded during the session.

Kuwait Investment Co was unchanged at 124 fils whereas National Investment Co inched 1 fil higher. KIPCO paused at 300 fils and International Financial Advisors edged

0.4 fil down. Commercial Facilities Co ticked 1 fil into green.

Kuwait Financial Centre (Markaz) rose 5 fils to 109 fils and Coast Investment Co gave up 2.2 fils. Securities House Co eased 0.6 fil to 52.2 fils and Al Mal Investment Co took in 0.5 fil. Kuwait Insurance Co rose 5 fils to 280 fils.

Bayan Investment Co and Arzan took in 1 fil each while Unicap dipped 6 fils to 41 fils. Osoul Investment fell 3 fils to 50 fils and Ektittab Holding gave up 2.5 fils. Noor Financial Investment Co trimmed 0.6 fils and Al Imtiaz clipped 2 fils.

National Real Estate Co took in 1 fil and Salhiya Real Estate Co dropped 5 fils to 345 fils. Tamdeen Real Estate Co slipped 4 fils to 395 fils and Mabanee Co gained 8 fils. Mazaya Holding paused at 110 fils.

The bourse has been mixed so far during the week and has gained 27 points in last two session. It had rallied 257 pts during whole of January and is trading 4.75 pct higher year-to-date. KSE, with 188 listed companies, is the second largest bourse in the region.

In the bourse related news, NAPESCO’s fourth quarter earnings rose 2 pct to KD 2.02 million in from KD 1.98 million in the same period a year earlier . During fiscal year 2017, earnings surged by 30.1 pct year-on-year to KD 10.02 million. The board members have recommended a cash dividend of 60% of par value or 60 fils per share for 2017.

Aqar Real Estate Investments’ fourth quarter profits dropped by 14.7 pct from the same period last year to KD 732,000. During fiscal year 2017, earnings saw a marginal year-on-year rise of 1.1 percent to KD 1.76 million . The board of directors has recommended cash dividend of 6 pct or 6 fils per share for FY17.

Al Imtiaz Investment Group slipped into red in the fourth quarter of 2017 as it incurred KD 2.9 million in losses in the quarter against profit of KD 6.7 million in the year-ago period. In the full-year 2017, it posted a profit of KD 30.85 mln, up 124.7% from previous year. The company attributed its higher annual profits to selling a part of its stake in an associate.

Yiaco Medical has recorded a loss of KD 482,100 in the July – Sept period , down 10.4% from in the same period of 2016. In the first nine-month of 2017, the losses stood at KD 8.9 million - a 271.8 pct surge in losses from same period of 2016.

Mideast Stocks

Blue chips buoy Egypt

Region stock markets mostly weak

DUBAI, Feb 5, (RTRS): Most Middle Eastern stock markets fell on Monday in line with a weak global trend, with Saudi Arabia seeing profit-taking in cement shares, but Egypt rose on the back of several blue chips.

The region had already dropped on Sunday in response to Wall Street’s Friday plunge, so Gulf markets far outperformed other bourses in Asia, where MSCI’s broadest index of Asia-Pacific shares outside Japan was down 1.4 percent on Monday afternoon.

The Saudi index slipped 0.3 percent as Tabuk Cement pulled back 1.9 percent. Tabuk and many other firms in the sector had jumped in the past several days on a media report that the government had started awarding contracts to build the huge NEOM business zone in the northwest of the country.

Many petrochemical shares were soft but PetroRabigh soared 9.9 percent after reporting fourth-quarter net profit jumped to 641.7 million riyals (\$170.9 million) from 181 million riyals a year ago, as sales increased 27 percent.

“There is a high level of debt – we are working on debt amortisation. God willing in 2020 we’ll finish paying all debts from the first phase of PetroRabigh, and what remains are debts from the second phase,” PetroRabigh chief executive Nasser al-Mahasher told Al Ekhbhariya television.

“This will reduce the level of indebtedness and will reflect on company performance and profitability.”

Mediterranean & Gulf Cooperative Insurance and Reinsurance plunged a further 9.4 percent after losing 9.9 percent on Sunday, when the Capital Market Authority said it might suspend or cancel trade in the stock following the central bank’s decision to prohibit the firm from issuing or renewing policies pending a capital increase.

Telecommunications firm Mobily surged 6.1 percent to 16.30 riyals in its highest volume for nearly a month after HSBC said the company was its preferred pick in the sector, with a target price of 25.50 riyals.

Dubai’s index fell 0.2 percent. Most real estate firms dropped with Emaar Properties 0.6 percent lower, but construction firm Arabtec climbed 1.9 percent.

In Qatar, the index slid 1.4 percent, bringing its losses in the past five trading days to 6.5 percent and making Qatar the worst-performing Gulf market in that period by a large margin.

Qatari banks, working to raise funds abroad in the face of the embargo by other Arab states, may face higher funding costs because of the recent jump in US yields. That could ultimately hurt real estate firms, which have already been hit by a property market slump magnified by the embargo.

Salam International Investment plunged its 10 percent daily limit after posting an annual net loss of 89.9 million riyals (\$24.7 million) versus a year-earlier profit of 119.7 million riyals.

Qatar Islamic Bank bucked the

downtrend, gaining 3.4 percent in its heaviest trade since last March.

In Egypt, the index rebounded 0.6 percent as Global Telecom gained 2.9 percent and investment firm Qalaa Holdings, the most heavily traded stock, added 5.7 percent. Exchange data showed foreign investors were net buyers of Egyptian stocks by a considerable margin.

National Housing rocketed 10 percent after saying it would hold an auction this month to sell the Meridian Heliopolis hotel.

Saudi Arabia

■ Index fell 0.3 percent to 7,587 points.

Dubai

■ Index fell 0.2 percent to 3,378 points.

Abu Dhabi

■ Index dropped 0.5 percent to 4,563 points.

Qatar

■ Index slipped 1.4 percent to 8,838 points.

Egypt

■ Index rose 0.6 percent to 14,962 points.

Kuwait

■ Index rose 0.6 percent to 6,712 points.

Bahrain

■ Index fell 0.8 percent to 1,344 points.

Oman

■ Index edged down 0.1 percent to 5,051 points.

KAMCO		KAMCO Boursa Kuwait Daily Report											
9505		Prepared by KAMCO Investment Research Department											
		5-Feb-2018											
Index Returns & Market Capitalization		Value	Daily Point Change	Percentage Change			Trading Indicators			Value	Daily Point Change	Daily Percent Change	YTD Daily Average
				DTD	MTD	YTD							
Price Index		6,712.2	41.37	0.62%	0.36%	4.75%	Volume (000 shares)			89,442	18,206	25.56%	114,023
KUWAIT15 Index		935.4	-5.09	-0.54%	-0.57%	2.25%	Value (000 KWD)			10,983	2,008	22.37%	14,125
Weighted Index		410.5	-1.07	-0.26%	-0.37%	2.25%	Trades			3,112	137	4.61%	4,115
Market Cap (KWD Million)		27,872.1	-75.75	-0.27%	-0.36%	2.31%							
		Close	Vol Traded	Trades	Value Traded	Change in Price	Beta	Dividend Yield	P/E	P/BV	52 Week Price (xwv)	YTD Daily Avg. Volume	
		KWD			KWD 000	(fil)	YTD* (%)	2016			High	Low	
SENERGY	0.038	0	0	0.0	0.00	7.1%	1.26	0.00%	NM	0.54	0.062	0.029	85.3
IPG	0.396	4	1	1.4	0.00	-0.8%	0.33	7.20%	9.8	0.63	0.450	0.310	37.9
NAPESCO	0.805	10	3	8.1	-5.00	1.6%	0.20	9.77%	8.1	2.85	1.680	0.757	12.7
ENERGYH	0.030	1	2	0.0	2.70	4.2%	0.65	0.00%	NM	0.74	0.053	0.025	20.2
GPI	0.033	477	28	15.6	-0.60	13.4%	0.99	0.00%	NM	0.39	0.057	0.026	2,603.9
ABAR	0.070	0	0	0.0	0.00	-16.7%	0.36	0.00%	6.3	0.25	0.104	0.049	7.7
Oil & Gas	491	34	25.1		0.6%			5.99%	NM	0.74			2,768
KFOUC	0.239	10	5	2.2	17.00	-4.0%	0.46	4.18%	21.7	0.79	0.370	0.200	123.3
BPCC	0.703	406	38	281.7	8.00	4.9%	1.02	5.51%	35.1	1.37	0.790	0.540	260.1
ALKOUT	0.680	0	0	0.0	0.00	13.3%	0.03	7.35%	9.6	2.14	0.700	0.580	2.4
ALQURAIN	0.332	140	37	46.5	0.00	0.9%	0.88	3.14%	10.4	1.03	0.370	0.285	299.9
Basic Materials	555	80	330.3		3.4%			4.58%	15.5	1.20			686
SPEC	0.069	2	15	0.2	0.00	-4.7%	0.26	0.00%	NM	0.35	0.105	0.056	51.3
KCEM	0.470	0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0%	0.78	4.14%	20.8	1.78	0.530	0.400	1.2
CABLE	0.442	13	4	5.6	20.00	5.5%	0.99	0.00%	10.7	0.63	0.590	0.400	50.8
SHIP	0.202	6	2	1.2	1.00	-2.4%	0.55	4.95%	5.8	0.74	0.242	0.173	101.7
PCEM	1.020	0	0	0.0	0.00	10.3%	1.01	7.84%	10.2	1.58	1.100	0.880	4.4
PAPER	0.250	30	3	7.5	0.00	3.7%	0.32	6.33%	14.9	1.38	0.510	0.193	17.3
ACICO	0.250	0	0	0.0	0.00	-4.9%	0.70	5.69%	11.6	0.71	0.335	0.225	27.7
HCC	0.100	0	0	0.0	0.00	-35.9%	0.11	0.00%	NM	0.68	0.216	0.100	2.3
NICBM	0.197	1	2	0.1	3.00	-4.8%	0.34	10.15%	NM	0.82	0.226	0.160	9.4
EQUIPMENT	0.040	76	6	3.0	2.00	19.8%	1.12	0.00%	NM	0.58	0.069	0.030	663.2
SALBOOKH	0.053	7	2	0.4	0.00	-0.2%	0.56	0.00%	NM	0.55	0.084	0.044	66.4
AGLTY	0.860	269	26	231.3	-4.00	7.2%	1.58	3.01%	17.6	1.21	0.984	0.560	630.3
EDU	0.331	0	0	0.0	0.00	7.1%	0.44	4.51%	14.3	1.93	0.480	0.200	31.0
CLEANING	0.060	30	1	1.8	-1.00	12.1%	0.83	0.00%	21.0	0.38	0.069	0.038	425.3
KGL	0.117	2,152	137	259.7	0.00	78.9%	1.28	0.00%	8.4	0.56	0.142	0.052	3,136.9
KCPC	0.154	5	1	0.8	6.00	9.2%	0.29	3.20%	7.2	0.75	0.198	0.134	9.2
HUMANSOFT	3.700	27	7	100.5	0.00	-1.0%	0.15	4.31%	16.7	9.47	4.400	3.000	120.8
NAFAIS	0.880	0	0	0.0	0.00	0.1%	0.11	0.00%	10.3	1.44	1.200	0.130	0.8
SHOOTING	0.025	145	22	3.6	0.00	13.2%	1.31	0.00%	NM	0.33	0.036	0.017	934.6
CGC	0.459	11	3	4.8	0.00	-3.2%	0.48	3.95%	13.2	1.61	0.620	0.375	7.2
MTCC	0.056	0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0%	0.54	0.00%	18.3	N/A	N/A	N/A	0.0
UPAC	0.700	0	0	0.0	0.00	19.7%	0.27	9.65%	7.7	1.92	0.920	0.482	0.4
ALAFCO	0.379	171	7	64.9	-5.00	1.1%	0.89	1.32%	11.0	1.26	0.410	0.240	101.3
MUBARRAD	0.072	117	5	8.3	0.60	13.0%	0.95	6.92%	4.3	0.59	0.084	0.055	180.4
LOGISTICS	0.054	3,603	150	197.2	-0.10	17.6%	0.91	0.00%	5.8	0.37	0.079	0.045	6,714.0
SCEM	0.079	0	0	0.0	0.00	-12.2%	0.45	10.13%	7.8	0.38	0.096	0.073	19.9
GCCEM	0.083	739	11	61.8	-3.00	3.8%	0.73	12.05%	15.8	0.72	0.095	0.070	144.0
QCEM	0.076	0	0	0.0	0.00	-5.0%	0.68	9.21%	14.9	0.56	0.099	0.065	7.1
FCCEM	0.072	253	4	18.1	-0.40	-4.5%	0.54	6.93%	8.0	0.30	0.093	0.065	216.9
RKWC	0.086	4	2	0.3	0.00	4.9%	0.68	8.72%	14.6	0.68	0.104	0.069	43.6
Industrials	7,660	410	971.1		3.8%			3.91%	15.0	1.19			13,719
CATTL	0.230	0	1	0.0	4.00	0.4%	0.42	2.10%	13.1	1.14	0.338	0.182	3.3
DANAH	0.075	94	7	6.8	3.90	9.2%	1.11	0.00%	NM	0.66	0.110	0.059	402.5
FOOD	1.045	3	2	3.6	-10.00	-6.0%	0.75	NM	8.9	9.25	2.700	1.001	4.3
MEZZAN	0.765	25	3	19.1	5.00	-1.3%	0.71	3.66%	16.8	2.22	1.040	0.686	-48.6
Consumer Goods	122	13	29.6		-3.7%			34.31%	11.8	3.19			577
ATC	1.100	0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0%	N/A	1.36%	NM	3.19	1.100	0.700	0.0
YIACO	0.192	0	0	0.0	0.00	9.7%	0.72	0.00%	NM	3.77	0.305	0.140	3.2
Health Care	0	0	0.0		1.6%			1.13%	NM	3.28			3
KCIN	1.140	30	12	32.3	10.00	-12.3%	0.09	4.34%	10.7	1.57	1.670	1.020	13.6
SULTAN	0.067	0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0%	1.29	0.00%	NM	3.23	0.090	0.064	0.0
IFAHR	0.190	0	0	0.0	0.00	5.6%	0.39	0.00%	41.5	1.99	0.302	0.144	4.4
OULAFUEL	0.115	227	17	26.1	0.00	3.6%	0.38	4.28%	12.9	0.77	0.136	0.103	112.0
MUNTAZAHAT	0.071	20	1	1.4	-0.40	1.4%	0.49	6.58%	7.2	0.53	0.091	0.061	43.2
JAZEERA	0.630	72	13	45.7	-18.00	-5.4%	0.53	5.56%	15.1	3.19	0.680	0.376	46.6
SOOR	0.115	19	10	2.2	0.00	3.6%	0.45	4.31%	12.9	0.77	0.138	0.101	38.3
FUTUREKID	0.124	0	0	0.0	0.00	24.0%	0.05	0.84%	11.1	0.70	0.124	0.100	10.4
ALRAI	0.111	21	1	2.3	0.00	-7.5%	0.62	17.90%	9.7	0.64	0.180	0.092	19.9
JIYAD	0.082	362	26	29.1	1.20	-5.5%	0.47	0.00%	33.1	2.39	0.130	0.041	3,057.0
Consumer Services	750	80	199.2		-2.5%			3.76%	45.7	1.42			3,346
ZAIN	0.459	888	126	409.2	-4.00	5.8%	1.54	6.88%	12.8	1.37	0.570	0.407	2,507.8
OOREODOO	1.169	0	5	0.3	19.00	8.2%	0.84	7.23%	12.0	0.97	1.380	1.000	5.1
AAN	0.029	1,767	126	51.3	-0.20	2.4%	0.99	0.00%	NM	0.46	0.061	0.025	1,782.7
VIVA	0.777	20	45	15.2	2.00	-2.8%	0.66	1.29%	9.9	2.49	0.940	0.671	36.2
Telecom	2,675	302	476		5.0%			6.16%	12.7	1.31			4,332
NBK	0.736	5,006	291	3,700.0	-8.00	1.1%	1.34	4.01%	13.9	1.47	0.800	0.640	2,257.3
GBK	0.241	486	22	117.8	-3.00	1.3%	0.73	2.77%	15.9	1.24	0.275	0.233	1,750.7
CBK	0.420	0	0	0.0	0.00	5.0%	0.57	3.56%	18.5	1.11	0.510	0.300	7.8
ABK	0.301	0	0	0.0	0.00	3.8%	0.44	3.63%	14.0	0.87	0.345	0.287	45.1
ALMUTAHED	0.347	83	13	29.1	-2.00	-0.6%	0.83	3.17%	15.7	1.61	0.475	0.331	159.6
KIB	0.225	504	16	113.3	-1.00	-1.3%	1.13	4.00%	12.8	0.91	0.270	0.199	707.6
BURG	0.314	30	5	9.2	-1.00	2.3%	1.08	1.57%	9.2	0.99	0.377	0.297	357.4
KFIN	0.586	2,137	159	1,252.9	-2.00	1.7%	1.36	2.86%	18.8	1.83	0.650	0.467	3,261.0
BOUBYAN	0.460	102	24	47.0	-2.00	5.5%	1.14	1.30%	23.0	2.87	0.476	0.395	311.6
WARBABANK	0.222	222	61	49.3	0.00	-3.5%	0.85	0.00%	34.4	2.30	0.285	0.195	795.5
AUB	0.210	82	12	17.2	0.00	1.9%	0.51	8.56%	8.7	1.48	0.280	0.183	2,367.8
THMR	0.058	10,746	306	638.8	-4.00	37.4%	1.10	0.00%	NM	1.38	0.099	0.028	15,973.2
Banks	19,398	909	5,974.6		2.1%			3.68%	14.7	1.49			27,995
KINS	0.280	18	4	5.0	5.00	1.8%	0.12	6.80%	7.4	0.77	0.315	0.228	12.2
GINS	0.700	0	0	0.0	0.00	-15.0%	0.17	5.47%	13.8	1.66	0.950	0.500	0.6
AINS	0.435	0	0	0.0	0.00	-6.5%	0.16	7.89%	8.7	0.84	0.510	0.344	3.9
WINS	0.062	2	3	0.1	-0.50	-4.7%	0.24	15.26%	NM	0.26	0.108	0.050	12.9
KUWAITRE	0.192	0	0	0.0	0.00	0.0%	N/A	5.21%	6.4	0.63	0.196	0.186	0.0
FTI	0.063	3	4	0.2	-1.50	-2.3%	0.12	0.00%	2.8	0.55	0.089	0.046	3.5
WETHAQ	0.039	0	0	0.0	0.00	-13.3%	0.14	0.00%	11.2	0.37	0.064	0.035	7.5
Insurance	23	11	5.8		-8.4%			6.46%	10.5	0.89			40
SOKOUK	0.047	27,462	186	1,309.8	-2.30	-1.5%	1.41	0.00%	NM	0.39	0.056	0.040	2,851.3
KRE	0.061	3,948	106	233.1	0.50	7.8%	1.43	0.00%	11.9	0.39	0.079	0.053	2,361.3
URC	0.074	6	2	0.4	0.00	-7.4%	1.02	6.11%	21.5	0.47	0.108	0.066	15.1
NRE	0.123	87	8	10.7	1.00	0.0%	1.40	0.00%	6.9	0.55	0.150	0.086	238.4
NRE	0.345	36	4	12.0	-5.00	-2.5%	0.32	5.58%	11.7	1.27	0.400	0.323	126.4
TAM	0.385	10	5	3.6	-4.00	-1.3%	0.54	2.38%	22.3	1.16	0.470	0.325	2.2
AREEC	0.166	0											

BUSINESS

Indian billionaire jeweller probed over fraud

Indian federal agents said on Monday they had launched an investigation into billionaire jeweller Nirav Modi, one of the country's richest men, over accusations that he and others defrauded a state bank of \$44 million.

The Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI) said it was acting on a complaint from the Punjab National Bank that Nirav Modi and others had conspired with bank officials to fraudulently obtain advances for

making payments to overseas suppliers.

A spokeswoman for Nirav Modi declined to comment.

The CBI's announcement of an investigation and registration of a complaint mark some of the early stages in an inquiry and do not mean the case will ever go to trial.

According to Forbes, Modi has a net worth of \$1.84 billion through his jewellery design and retail busi-

nesses, making him the 85th richest person in India.

The bank had filed a complaint saying public money "seems to have been embezzled by committing fraud", the CBI said.

CBI spokesman Abhishek Dayal said raids were conducted over the weekend at 21 locations linked to companies of Modi and others accused in the case. Modi's residence was also searched, Dayal said. (RTRS)

Broadcom sweetens bid for Qualcomm to \$121 bn

Broadcom raised its bid for rival computer chipmaker Qualcomm on Monday to \$121 billion, offering the richest-ever takeover effort in the tech sector in an effort to become the dominant player in the fast-growing market for connected devices.

Singapore-based Broadcom, which has begun a process to reincorporate in the United States, called the hostile bid its "best and final offer."

The price hike steps up the pressure on California-based Qualcomm, the dominant producer of chips for mobile devices, which is set to hold its annual shareholders meeting next month.

In a letter to Qualcomm board members, Broadcom chief executive Hock Tan called the offer "extremely compelling compared to any other alternative available to Qualcomm" and called on the board to open talks on the propos-

al. But he said the deal would be off the table if it fails to win approval next month by shareholders.

The new bid represents \$82 per Qualcomm share, up from a previous offer of \$70 a share, and was said to be 50 percent higher than Qualcomm's share price before the tie-up was proposed in November.

"We continue to hope you choose to engage with us for the benefit of your stockholders," Tan said. (AFP)

the bottomline

SAN FRANCISCO: Wells Fargo is under severe pressure ahead of the first day of trading since the Federal Reserve said it would freeze growth at the bank following a series of scandals.

The Fed announced after the market closed Friday that it would restrict the bank's assets to the level where they stood at the end of last year until it can demonstrate improved internal controls.

The company's stock is down 9 percent before the opening bell Monday, erasing about \$7 billion in market capitalization.

The reputation of **Wells Fargo & Co** has been battered since acknowledging that it opened phony customer accounts and sold auto insurance to customers who didn't need it. It also refunded customers after acknowledging that its bankers unfairly charged fees to lock in interest rates on mortgages. (AP)

NEW YORK: British convenience store operator EG Group is buying Kroger's convenience store unit for \$2.15 billion as it expands into the US.

Kroger and other grocery store operators have been facing tougher competition from companies including **Walmart** and **Amazon**. The Cincinnati company has been considering a sale of its convenience store operations since October.

EG Group expects to close the purchase of the Kroger's business unit early this year. The acquisition includes 66 locations in 18 states employing 11,000 workers.

EG Group will base its North American headquarters in Cincinnati.

Kroger plans to use proceeds from the sale to buy back stock and pay down debt. (AP)

LONDON: British supermarket king **Tesco** forecast on Monday that annual underlying profits would soar this year by almost a quarter.

Operating profit before exceptional items was expected to reach "at least" £1.58 billion (\$2.22 billion, 1.78 billion euros) for the group's financial year ending on February 24, Tesco said in a brief update.

That marked a 23-percent jump from the previous 2016-2017 financial year, and was in line with expectations after a major restructuring overseen by chief executive Dave Lewis.

"The group's trading performance has been in line with management's expectations" since the last trading update issued on January 11, it added. (AFP)

LONDON: Another 452 jobs are to be cut at **Carillion**, the British government said on Monday, meaning about 5 percent of the collapsed construction and support services company's domestic workforce has been put out of a job so far.

Carillion, which employed around 18,000 people in the United Kingdom, collapsed on Jan 15 when its banks halted funding, triggering Britain's biggest corporate failure in a decade and forcing the government to step in to guarantee public services from school meals to roadworks. (RTRS)

LONDON: Ireland's troubled **Ryanair** said Monday that quarterly net profits rose 12 percent despite a cancellations crisis, but warned Britain was underestimating the risk of "serious disruption" to flights following Brexit.

Profit after tax increased to 106 million euros (\$132 million) in the group's third quarter, or three months to December, from a year earlier, the Dublin-based carrier said in a statement. Passenger numbers grew six percent to 30.4 million people.

In another boost, the group forecast passenger traffic would climb eight percent to 130 million for the full year which ends in March 2018. That was upgraded from previous guidance of 129 million. (AFP)

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German workers approved Monday their union's results in talks with India's **Tata Steel** and **ThyssenKrupp's** steel division ahead of a planned merger — but the vote does not remove all obstacles to the tie-up.

Some 92.2 percent of IG Metall members polled agreed to executives' guarantee not to slash jobs or close major sites until at least September 2026 if the fusion succeeds, the union said in a statement.

"We managed to clear up important points in favour of the employees," said Detlef Wetzel, who sits on ThyssenKrupp Steel's supervisory board as a worker representative. (AFP)

FRANKFURT AM MAIN: German high-end sports car maker **Porsche** said Monday it would double investments in electrifying its entire range by 2022, as parent company **Volkswagen** reacts to environmental scandals and new challenges from abroad.

The Stuttgart-based firm said it would spend more than six billion euros (\$7.5 billion) in developing hybrid and battery-powered cars over the coming five years.

Of the additional three billion euros being put on the table, some 500 million euros will go towards developing Porsche's flagship all-electric vehicle known as the Mission E, slated for release in late 2019. (AFP)

BEIJING: Troubled Chinese conglomerate **Wanda** announced Monday that e-commerce giant **Alibaba** has agreed to buy a stake in its cinema division for around \$750 million, the latest sell-off by the heavily-indebted group.

Wanda Film said in a regulatory filing that Alibaba will buy a 7.66 percent stake for 4.68 billion yuan, and a holding company controlled by the Beijing government will take 5.11 percent for 3.12 billion yuan (around \$500 million), generating over \$1.2 billion for the conglomerate.

Following rapid diversification, Wanda ended up mired in debt and under the scrutiny of Chinese regulators, forcing its head Wang Jianlin — once China's richest man — to sell off parts of his empire. (AFP)

TOKYO: Japanese electronics giant **Panasonic** on Monday upgraded its annual earnings targets thanks to a weak yen and robust demand for its automotive products.

The Osaka-based company raised an annual profit forecast for the year to March to 210 billion yen (\$1.9 billion), up from an earlier projection of 160 billion yen.

The company now expects an annual operating profit of 350 billion yen, up from a previous target of 335 billion yen. It raised an annual sales target to 7.95 trillion yen from 7.8 trillion yen. (AFP)

LONDON, Feb 5, (Agencies): Stock markets were routed around the globe on Monday, with European indexes opening lower and bond yields rising as resurgent US inflation raised the possibility central banks would tighten policy more aggressively than had been expected.

Europe's benchmark Stoxx 600 fell 1.5 percent, its sixth consecutive day of losses totalling 4.6 percent — the biggest decline since the United Kingdom voted in June 2016 to leave the European Union.

All major indexes in Europe fell: the UK's FTSE 100 dropped 1.4 percent, France's CAC 40 1.4 percent and Germany's DAX 1 percent.

Friday's US payrolls report showed wages growing at their fastest pace in more than eight years, fuelling expectations that both inflation and interest rates would rise more than previously forecast.

That sparked a sell-off in US equities that is set to continue on Monday. Dow Jones futures pointed to the market opening 1.1 percent lower, with the S&P 500 down 0.6 percent and the NASDAQ down 0.9 percent.

Futures markets priced in the risk of three, or even more, rate rises by the Federal Reserve this year after Friday's data release.

Rising US yields gave the dollar some support. Against a basket of currencies, the dollar was up fractionally at 89.267, after climbing 0.6 percent on Friday for its biggest single-day gain in three months.

Any rally by the dollar weakens commodities priced in the currency, with the Thomson Reuters CRB index down 0.5 percent. Gold was off at \$1,335.78 an ounce after losing 1 percent on Friday.

In oil markets, Brent fell 1.36 percent to \$67.66 a barrel and US crude dropped 1.06 percent to \$64.76.

US

US stocks pared losses to trade little changed in late morning trading on Monday as a rise in bond yields paused and technology stocks gained.

Wall Street's three major indexes logged their biggest weekly losses in two years on Friday after a strong payrolls report.

The S&P 500 and the Dow saw their worst weeks since early January 2016 while the Nasdaq recorded its worst week since early February 2016.

It was also the biggest daily point fall in the Dow since December 2008 during the financial crisis.

Shares of Apple rose 1.7 percent and were the biggest boost to all the three major indexes. The tech sector was the biggest gainer with a 0.62 percent rise. At 10:49 am ET (1549 GMT), the

local gold

BEC			
Muzaini Exchange	12,062.730	1,426.660	385.640

Dow Jones Industrial Average was down 14.92 points, or 0.06 percent, at 25,506.04, the S&P 500 was down 0.24 points, or 0.008 percent, at 2,761.89.

The Nasdaq Composite was up 22.22 points, or 0.31 percent, at 7,263.16.

Friday's US payrolls report showed wages growing at their fastest pace in more than eight years, fueling concerns that both inflation and interest rates would rise faster than expected.

Currently, traders are pricing in three rate hikes for 2018, but if the economy and corporate earnings continue to improve, the chances of a fourth increase becomes more likely.

Seven of the 11 major S&P sectors were lower, with the energy index's 0.89 percent fall leading the decliners.

Wells Fargo fell 7.2 percent after the Fed imposed new regulatory restrictions over compliance issues.

Qualcomm fell 2.3 percent after KGI Securities said Apple might drop the chipmaker in favor of Intel as the supplier for modem chips in its next generation of iPhones. Shares of Intel rose 2.3 percent.

Declining issues outnumbered advancers on the NYSE by 1,766 to 1,077. On the Nasdaq, 1,648 issues fell and 1,163 advanced.

The S&P 500 index showed 1 new 52-week high and 7 new lows, while the Nasdaq recorded 15 new highs and 87 new lows.

Europe

European stocks suffered a sharp sell-off on Monday as growing inflation expectations and rising bond yields took their toll on equity markets.

Europe's STOXX 600 fell 1.6 percent to close at its lowest level since mid-November 2017. It was its sixth straight day of declines for the STOXX, while eurozone stocks fell 0.6 percent.

Among major European equity markets, only Spain and Italy are still higher than at the turn of the year, with Britain the worst performer. German bond yields hit a two-year high as fears of inflation drove a sustained sell-off in bond markets.

All sectors were in the red on Monday, but the rise in bond yields particularly hit sectors with high-dividend paying stocks known as "bond proxies".

Europe's personal and household goods index and telecoms both fell more than 2 percent.

Company earnings provided little solace to investors.

Ryanair fell 2.7 percent after the airline struck a cautious tone about fares and potential disruption from pilot unions, though it reported rising profits.

Gold miner Randgold Resources dropped 7.4 percent after saying that it was fighting to prevent the adoption of a new mining code in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

Randgold Resources also doubled its dividend after profits rose 14 percent in 2017.

Gold 999 kg

Gold 999 10 tola

Gold ounce

Gold gm 22k

Gold gm 21k

Gold gm 18k

100 gm 999

10 gm 999

Overall Europe has so far seen more earnings misses than beats for the first time since the fourth quarter of 2014, Morgan Stanley analysts said.

While the earnings season was still in its early days, Morgan Stanley also found post-results price performance showed a clear negative skew, indicating investors are quick to punish companies for missing earnings and sales expectations.

Analysts began revising earnings down last week, I/B/E/S data showed, as the equities sell-off deepened.

Fiat Chrysler fell 3.6 percent after sources told Reuters late on Friday that the US Justice Department was seeking "substantial" fines in the emissions case against the Italian carmaker.

Eurozone businesses increased activity in 2018 at their fastest pace in over a decade as new orders surged, survey data showed.

While the data showed the region's economic growth was sustained, it was not unambiguously positive for equities, as it could add to upward pressure on bond yields.

Asia

Most Asian markets tumbled Monday after US stocks were pummeled at the end of last week, with traders fretting that a surging US economy will lead to sharp interest rate rises by the Federal Reserve.

The selling was also fuelled by profit-taking after a blistering January that saw several indexes strike record or multi-year highs, while energy firms were hit by a drop in oil prices.

The losses seeped through to Asia this week.

Tokyo ended 2.6 percent lower, while Hong Kong sank more than one percent and Sydney closed down 1.6 percent.

Seoul lost 1.3 percent, Singapore dropped 1.2 percent and Taipei shed 1.6 two percent, with Manila and Wellington also suffering in the heaviest blood-letting in the region this year. Jakarta pared losses after data showed Indonesia's economic growth picked up last year.

However, Shanghai recovered to end 0.7 percent higher.

Energy firms across Asia were sharply down as crude tanked on the back of news that US drillers brought more rigs back online to take advantage of a recent rise in prices.

CNOOC, PetroChina and Sinopec sank between two and three percent in Hong Kong, while Inpex bombed almost four percent in Tokyo and Woodside Petroleum was off 2.6 percent in Sydney.

Hong Kong-listed Tencent plunged almost two percent Monday, while Sharp dived four percent in Tokyo.

However, Samsung bounced back from three percent losses in morning Seoul trade after an appeals court upheld heir Lee Jae-Yong's bribery conviction but cut his prison sentence to a suspended term, ordering his immediate release.

■ Key figures around 0820 GMT

Tokyo — Nikkei 225: Down 2.6 percent at 22,682.08 (close)

Hong Kong — Hang Seng: Down 1.1 percent at 32,245.22 (close)

Shanghai — Composite: Up 0.7 percent at 3,487.50 (close)

Dollar/yen: Down at 109.94 yen from 110.18 yen

Oil

Oil prices neared their lowest in a month on Monday as rising US output and a weaker physical market added to the pressure from a widespread decline across equities and commodities.

Friday's US jobs report that showed the fastest wage growth in nearly nine years exacerbated a broader market sell-off that was already under way as European stocks backed off record highs, and a rising dollar dented commodities.

Brent crude futures were down 70 cents at \$67.88 a barrel by 1435 GMT, while US West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude fell 42 cents to \$65.03.

The S&P 500 saw its largest one-day fall since September 2016 on Friday, but is still up 3 percent since the start of this year and up 21 percent since February 2017, having hit a record high in late January.

Although volatility in oil is rising, it is still close to its lowest in three years.

The physical crude market has also deteriorated in the last few weeks, as the price of North Sea oil has hit its lowest in eight months, while Russian Urals crude changed hands last week at its lowest in a year.

Gold

Gold rose on Monday, clawing back some lost ground after recording its biggest one-day loss in two months in the previous session, as a slide in stock markets helped the metal rebound.

Prices fell 1.2 percent on Friday after stronger-than-expected US payrolls data shored up expectations that a pick-up in inflation will spur further US interest rate hikes this year, boosting the dollar, in which gold is priced.

The US currency steadied on Monday, while stock markets were routed around the globe as resurgent US inflation raised the possibility central banks would tighten policy more aggressively than had been expected.

Spot gold was at \$1,335.72 an ounce at 1445 GMT, up 0.2 percent but well below late January's 17-month high of \$1,366.07. US gold futures for April delivery were \$1 an ounce higher at \$1,338.30.

US stocks opened sharply lower, extending the rout equity markets experienced on Friday on the back of rising bond yields and prospects for increasing inflation.

While gold is often considered an inflation hedge, Julius Baer said in a note, the fact that price pressures were being driven by confidence about growth rather than dollar weakness and rising oil prices meant it was failing to react positively.

exchange rates – Feb 5

		US dollar			Sterling pound			Euro			Japanese yen			Swiss franc			Canadian dollar			Swedish krona			Saudi riyal			UAE dirham			Bahraini dinar			Omani riyal			
		Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer				
BEC	Buy	296350	298100	298100	418112	416112	416112	368339	368338	368338	002644	002644	002644	316139	317138	317138	236374	234373	234373	033913	033913	033913	079033	079533	079533	080376	080331	080331	790382	789882	789882	774071	768773	768773	
	Sell	300770	300450	300450	425612	425712	425712	375839	375438	375438	002824	002824	002824	327139	324138	324138	245374	244373	244373	038913	038913	038913	080333	080173	080173	082076	081827	081827	798882	798382	798382	779751	777973	777973	
Muzaini	Sell	300350	301550	301550	—	418400	418400	—	369400	369400	—	271200	271200	—	314280	314280	—	243280	243280	—	—	—	—	080467	080467	—	082177	082177	—	801250	801250	—	783654	783654	
Dollarco	Sell	301000	301000	301000	426500	425125	425125	376500	375360	375360	—	002737	002737	315000	290865	290865	239000	242420	242420	—	—	—	082500	080920	080920	082750	082110	082110	803000	798075	798075	—	—	—	
Commercial Bank	Buy	297000	299050	299050	420000	422528	422528	371000	372586	372586	—	002718	002718	319000	321386	321386	238000	240888	240888	—	037912	037912	078000	079766	079766	081174	081450	081450	790853	794079	794079	775299	777036	777036	
	Sell	302150	301150	301150	429000	425495	425495	378000	375203	375203	—	002737	002737	328000	323643	323643	249000	242579	242579	—	038178	038178	082000	080326	080326	081990	082021	082021	798802	799655	799655	783091	782492	782492	
Gulf Bank	Buy	299050	299050	299050	419890	419890	419890	370490	370490	370490	000271	000271	000271	319590	319590	319590	239540	239540	239540	037760	037760	037760	079610	079610	079610	081230	081230	081230	789420	789420	789420	775400	775400	775400	
	Sell	301150	301150	301150	428380	428380	428380	378080	378080	378080	000275	000275	000275	326180	326180	326180	244450	244450	244450	038190	038190	038190	080710	080710	080710	082240	082240	082240	801230	801230	801230	786200	786200	786200	
NBK	Buy	—	299050	299050	—	422020	422020	—	372440	372440	—	002715	002715	—	320940	320940	—	240610	240610	—	037780	037780	—	079670	079670	—	081360	081360	—	792080	792080	—	776250	776250	
	Sell	—	301150	301150	—	426640	426640	—	376710	376710	—	002748	002748	—	325110	325110	—	243370	243370	—	038190	038190	—	080440	080440	—	082120	082120	—	800080	800080	—	783430	783430	
ARBK	Buy	—	299050	299050	—	420790	420790	—	372407	372407	—	002717	002717	—	321300	321300	—	248000	248000	—	037821	037821	—	079637	079637	—	080510	080510	—	798904	798904	—	786844	786844	
	Sell	—	301150	301150	—	425193	425193	—	375172	375172	—	002738	002738	—	323730	323730	—	242589	242589	—	038101	038101	—	080410	080410	—	082099	082099	—	809586	809586	—	792510	792510	
Burg Bank	Buy	298450	300950	300950	396510	399560	399560	354510	357180	357180	—	002738	002738	—	324052	324052	—	249603	249603	—	034490	034490	079290	079300	079300	082203	081250	081250	—	788840	788840	—	774320	781712	
	Sell	304450	303050	303050	407830	407850	407850	364920	365200	365200	—	002734	002734	—	312040	312040	—	239920	239920	—	035840	035840	082010	081350	081350	083029	083130	083130	—	809320	809320	—	794270	790029	
KFH	Buy	297340	299050	299050	418714	412571	412571	368910	371480	371480	—	002711	002711	—	320182	320182	—	240124	240124	—	037830	037830	079143	079636	079636	080806	081310	081310	784311	792584	792584	768340	776370	776370	
	Sell	302870	301150	301150	430863	427663	427663	380132	377220	377220	—	002755	002755	—	326061	326061	—	243846	243846	—	038309	038309	080903	080412	080412	082607	082104	082104	807330	799549	799549	790123	782574	782574	
KBE	Sell	—	304300	304300	—	380900	380900	—	332100	332100	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	082810	082810	—	806500	806500	—	—	—	
		Danish krone			Indian rupee			Pakistani rupee			Sri Lanka rupee			Bangladesh taka			Philippine peso			Australian dollar			Hong Kong dollar			Singapore dollar			Jordanian dinar			Egyptian pound			
		Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	
BEC	Buy	046159	040459	040459	000800	000421	000421	002528	002684	002684	001688	001908	001908	003847	003592	003592	005840	005378	005378	225982	227581	227581	036319	035819	035819	222906	223055	223055	418146	417974	417974	014067	016268	016268	
	Sell	051159	051159	051159	004841	004699	004699	002818	002716	002716	002628	001948	001948	003831	003607	003607	006140	005843	005843	241582	240581	240581	039069	038919	038919	232506	229505	229505	428146	425474	425474	019785	017130	017130	
Muzaini	Sell	—	—	—	004719	004875	004875	002722	002950	002950	001951	002270	002270	003650	003850	003850	005890	006250	006250	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	425320	425320	019700	017020	017020	
Dollarco	Sell	—	—	—	004875	004685	004685	002950	002150	002150	002250	001948	001948	003850	003640	003640	006280	005830	005830	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	427000	424545	424545	018500	017024	017024
Commercial Bank	Buy	—	050063	050063	004000	—	—	—	—	—	002000	—	—	—	—	—	005000	—	—	236000	237162	237162	—	038230	038230	—	227060	227060	420000	—	—	012000	—	—	
	Sell	—	050414	050414	006500	004710	004710	—	002729	002729	003500	001955	001955	—	003640	003640	007900	005867	005867	243000	238827	238827	—	038498	038498	—	228655	228655	432000	425864	425864	002300	017601	017601	
Gulf Bank	Buy	049930	049930	049930	004760	004760	004760	002760	002760	002760	001980	001980	001980	003680	003680	003680	005920	005920	005920	236620	236520	236520	038020	038020	038020	226600	226600	226600	427940	427940	427940	017310	017310	017310	
	Sell	050580	050580	050580	—	004639	004639	—	—	—	—	001928	001928	—	—	—	005680	005680	—	239690	239690	—	038290	038290	—	—	—	—	419420	419420	—	016480	016480		
NBK	Buy	—	049930	049930	—	004715	004715	—	002737	002737	—	001963	001963	—	—	—	005870	005870	—	240590	240590	—	038470	038470	—	—	—	—	427710	427710	—	017160	017160		
	Sell	—	050036	050036	—	004650	004650	—	002691	002691	—	001935	001935	—	003594	003594	005790	005790	—	237071	237071	—	038274	038274	—	—	—	—	420900	420900	—	016270	016270		
Burg Bank	Buy	—	050412	050412	—	004712	004712	—	002727	002727	—	001955	001955	—	003646	003646	005865	005865	—	238887	238887	—	038760	038760	—	—	—	—	425052	425052	—	017777	017777		
	Sell	—	045090	045090	—	0046371	0046371	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	005865	005865	—	227710	227710	—	038760	038760	—	—	—	—	423280	423280	—	016080	016080		
ARBK	Buy	—	047290	047290	—	0047838	0047838	—	004668	004668	—	002119	002119	—	—	—	006648	006648	—	232950	232950	—	039210	039210	—	—	—	—	431960	431960	—	018240	018240		
	Sell	—	049945	049945	—	004631	004631	—	002682	002682	—	001932	001932	—	003556	003556	005755	005755	—	23610	23610	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	420723	420723	—	016941	016941		
KFH	Buy	—	050642	050642	—	004738	004738	—	002737	002737	—	001959	001959	—	003650	003650	005912	005912	—	240890	240890	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	425233	425233	—	017121	017121		
	Sell	—	—	—	—	004694	004694	—	—	—	—	001984	001984	—	003778	003778	006060	006060	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	016990	016990	—	—	
		Cyprus pound			Yemeni rial			Thai baht			South African rand			Korean won			Syrian pound			Iranian Riyal			Lebanese pound			Malaysian ringgit			Indonesian rupiah			New Zealand dollar			
		Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	Cash	Draft	Transfer	
BEC	Buy	—	—	—	000976	001148	001148	009192	009109	009109	000265	—	—	001273	000491	000491	000083	—	—	000148	000182	000182	073655	071928	071928	073655	071928	071928	000018	000017	000017	212847	210847	210847	
	Sell	—	—	—	001058	001248	001248	009742	009																										

British rider ‘confident’ of progress in probe

Froome to start season in Spain under doping cloud

LONDON, Feb 5, (AFP): Chris Froome said Monday he is “confident” of progress in a probe into his adverse doping test as the British rider prepares for his first race of the season at this month’s Ruta del Sol.

Froome will be part of Team Sky’s line-up for the five-day stage race in Andalusia, southern Spain, which runs from Feb 14 to 18.

Froome and his Team Sky revealed in December that the 32-year-old had

CYCLING

tested for elevated levels of the asthma medication salbutamol during the Vuelta a Espana, which he won for the first time in September.

Although salbutamol is permitted in certain doses, the four-time Tour de France winner gave a urine reading of twice the allowed limit. However, as the medication can be taken legally, Froome was not suspended by cycling’s governing body the UCI but merely asked to explain the elevated reading.



This file photo taken on Dec 14, 2017 shows British cyclist Chris Froome of Sky Team heading to a training session in Port de Alcudia on the Spanish island of Mallorca. (AFP)

Youngs set to miss Wales clash

Six Nations to ‘investigate’ France use of HIA protocols

LONDON, Feb 5, (Agencies): France are to be investigated over their use of head injury assessment (HIA) protocols during their opening Six Nations loss to Ireland, organisers said on Sunday.

Flyhalf Matthieu Jalibert and scrum-half Antoine Dupont left the field due to knee injuries and they were also listed as requiring HIAs.

When Dupont went off in the dying minutes, starting scrumhalf Maxime Machenaud was allowed to return to the field which would not have been allowed without an HIA.

“Depending on their findings, Six Nations Rugby Limited will be considering the next steps in respect of those incidents,” the ruling body said.

Referee Nigel Owens said the match doctor told him an HIA was required. Ireland won the game in Paris 15-13 on Saturday thanks to an 83rd-minute drop-goal by Johnny Sexton.

“The players did have knee injuries but the independent doctor decided on the HIA,” France coach Jacques Brunel said.

Meanwhile, England scrum-half Ben Youngs is likely to miss the Six Nations clash against Wales at Twickenham next weekend after suffering knee ligament damage in Sunday’s victory over Italy in Rome.

Youngs was injured just nine minutes into the 46-15 victory on the opening weekend of the Six Nations when his left leg was trapped as he passed from the back of a ruck.

A full assessment of the injury was to be carried out on Monday with a chance that he also might be out for the entire championship. England would also name as replacement on Monday, officials said.

England coach Eddie Jones forecast fans were in for a treat following the “wonderful rugby” played on the opening weekend of this season’s Six Nations.

Jones’s men launched their bid for an unprecedented third successive outright title by rounding off the first round of fixtures with a 46-15 win away to Italy in Rome on Sunday.



Youngs

A crowd of more than 61,000 spectators at the Stadio Olimpico saw England run in seven tries, with an emboldened Italy scoring two of their own before fading away late on.

Scotland head coach **Gregor Townsend** says his side must improve on their shocking away record if they are to challenge the top sides in the Six Nations after a painful opening defeat against Wales.

The Scots were crushed 34-7 in Cardiff on Saturday, meaning they have won just six of 46 away games since the tournament was expanded in 2000 — and four of those victories were over annual strugglers Italy.

Josh van der Flier has been ruled out for the rest of the season after suffering a knee injury in Ireland’s Six Nations win against France, the Irish Rugby Football Union said Monday.

RUGBY

The flanker sustained a serious knee ligament injury during Saturday’s match in Paris and was replaced by **Dan Leavy**.

Fly-half **Johnny Sexton** scored a dramatic late drop goal to earn the Irish a 15-13 Six Nations victory against France.

England international **Thomas Waldrom** said on Monday he will leave reigning English Premiership champions **Exeter** at the end of the season to return to his native New Zealand.

The free-scoring No.8 has scored 50 tries in 91 appearances for the club since joining from **Leicester** in 2014.

“The Chiefs will always be a big part of my life and I’ll definitely come back and visit in the future,” said the 34-year-old forward, who has played five Tests for England.

English Premiership strugglers **Worcester** announced on Monday that head coach **Carl Hogg** would be leaving the club at the end of the season.

Worcester said Hogg, a 48-year-old former Scotland international who joined the Warriors in 2013, would depart Sixways when his contract expired.

Coyotes return G Hill to minors

Swede Forsberg hit with ban for late check

LOS ANGELES, Feb 5, (Agencies): Nashville Predators forward Filip Forsberg has been slapped with a three game suspension for a late hit on an unsuspecting New York Rangers player, the National Hockey League announced on Sunday.

Forsberg hit Jimmy Vesey in the second period of a game on Saturday, checking the Rangers player in the head area well after he had passed the puck. Game officials gave Forsberg an interference penalty.

Vesey was hurt and did not return in a 5-2 loss to the Predators.

Former Swedish national team member Forsberg is second on the Predators with 38 points. His ban begins Monday on the road against the New York Islanders.

Goalie **Adin Hill**, called up by the **Arizona Coyotes** on Friday after goalie **Antti Raanta** was involved in a car accident, was optioned back to AHL Tucson on Sunday.

Raanta has rejoined the team, but **Scott Wedgewood** started for the Coyotes on Thursday in a 4-1 loss to the **Dallas Stars** and again Saturday in a 6-0 road defeat against the **Los Angeles Kings**.

Hill, 21, has played three career NHL games, all for Arizona in October. He lost twice to the Stars and once to the **New York Rangers**, producing a 3.76 goals-against average and an .880 save percentage.

For in 20 games Tucson this season, Hill is 9-10-1 with two shutouts, a 2.59 GAA and a .905 save percentage.



Gustavo Nunez (left), of the Dominican Republic’s Aguilas Cibaenas tags out at second base Damek Tomscha (right), of Puerto Rico’s Criollos de Caguas during the Caribbean Baseball Series at the Charros Jalisco Stadium in Guadalajara, Jalisco state, Mexico, on Feb 4. (AFP)

Team Sky said in December they were providing information to the UCI over the matter and confirmed in a statement on Monday that the process

was ongoing.

“I’m confident that we will be able to get to the bottom of what has happened and I’m working hard with the

Dominican Republic breaks 11-game slide

GUADALAJARA, Mexico, Feb 5, (AP): Francisley Bueno pitched six scoreless innings, Edwin Espinal had two RBIs and the Dominican Republic beat Puerto Rico 6-3 on Sunday to break an 11-game losing streak in the Caribbean Series.

Bueno (1-0) allowed six hits and struck out three, helping Aguilas Cibaenas to the Dominicans’ first win in the tournament since Feb 5, 2015, when the Cibao Gigantes beat Mexico’s Culiacan Tomateros 3-2.

The 11-game losing streak by the Dominican Republic was the second-longest in Caribbean Series history, just one game short of the record set by Puerto Rico between 2003 and 2005. The Dominicans, who lost 14-5 to Venezuela in their first game, will play Cuba on Monday. Reigning champion Puerto Rico will

face Venezuela.

In the late game, Nestor Molina pitched into the sixth inning and Williams Astudillo homered to help Venezuela to a 6-4 win over Mexico. Molina (1-0) allowed five hits and two runs over 5-1/3 innings. The Anzoategui

BASEBALL

Caribes are trying to give Venezuela its eighth title in the tournament. Mexico fell to 0-3 in a Caribbean Series for the first time since the 2003 edition that was played in Puerto Rico. At home, the last time the Mexicans fell to 0-3 was in 1987, at Hermosillo.

team to do that,” Froome said in the statement on the team’s website.

“Obviously I understand that this situation has created a lot of uncertainty. I completely get why there has been so much interest and speculation. “I hope that people will appreciate there are limits to what I can say whilst the process is still ongoing but no one is keener than me to move things forward as quickly as possible.”

Team principal Dave Brailsford said: “We all recognise that these are difficult circumstances but it’s important for all sides that this process is conducted fairly before a final conclusion is reached.

“It is a complex situation but we’re working as hard as we can with Chris to resolve things as soon as possible.”

Froome, who will line up in Spain after spending the early part of the year training in South Africa, last raced the Ruta del Sol in 2015, when he took overall victory and picked up a stage win along the way.

“I have put in a hard training block in January,” said Froome. “It’s been good to be out on my bike and to get the miles under my belt.

Tuch’s go-ahead goal lifts Golden Knights over Caps

Lehkonen scores twice as Habs top Sens 4-1

WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (AP): Alex Tuch scored the go-ahead goal with 5:12 remaining and the Vegas Golden Knights defeated the Washington Capitals 4-3 Sunday in a matchup of division leaders.

The Knights rallied three times from one-goal deficits before Tuch’s shot from in close. Capitals goalie Philipp Grubauer tied to corral the loose puck, but knocked it into the net with his catching hand. Washington challenged the play for goaltender interference, but the goal stood.

Nicklas Backstrom gave Metropoli-

ICE HOCKEY



Vegas Golden Knights center Ryan Carpenter (40) lunges to shoot the puck as Washington Capitals goaltender Philipp Grubauer (31), from Germany, defends in the first period of an NHL hockey game on Feb 4, in Washington. (AP)

NHL Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (RTRS): Results and standings from the NHL games on Sunday.													
Las Vegas	4	Washington	3	San Jose	3	Carolina	1						
Montreal		Ottawa	1										
Western Conference						Eastern Conference							
Central Division						Atlantic Division							
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	Pts	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Winnipeg	31	13	9	172	140	71	Tampa Bay	36	13	3	187	134	75
Nashville	31	12	7	156	127	69	Boston	31	11	8	164	121	70
St Louis	32	19	3	153	134	67	Toronto	30	19	5	172	150	65
Dallas	30	19	4	165	139	64	Florida	22	22	6	143	163	50
Minnesota	28	19	5	153	150	61	Detroit	21	22	8	134	151	50
Colorado	28	19	4	164	149	60	Montreal	22	25	6	139	164	50
Chicago	24	20	8	153	145	56	Ottawa	17	25	9	132	176	43
							Buffalo	14	29	9	117	171	37
Pacific Division						Metropolitan Division							
W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS	W	L	OTL	GF	GA	PTS		
Las Vegas	35	13	4	177	140	74	Washington	30	17	5	162	152	65
San Jose	28	16	8	152	142	64	New Jersey	27	16	8	154	151	62
Los Angeles	28	19	5	148	126	61	Pittsburgh	29	22	3	164	162	61
Calgary	26	18	8	147	149	60	Columbus	27	21	4	137	147	58
Anaheim	25	18	10	147	149	60	Philadelphia	24	19	9	150	154	57
Edmonton	22	24	4	138	161	48	NY Islanders	26	22	5	177	192	57
Vancouver	21	25	6	137	168	48	Carolina	24	21	8	143	162	56
Arizona	12	31	9	119	182	33	NY Rangers	25	22	5	155	160	55
Note: Overtime losses (OTL) are worth one point in the standings and are not included in the loss column (L)													

Rangers sign Colon to minor league deal

ARLINGTON, Texas, Feb 5, (AP): The Texas Rangers have signed 44-year-old Bartolo Colon to a minor league contract and invited the pitcher to big league spring training.

The Rangers announced the move Sunday.

Colon was a combined 7-14 with a 6.48 ERA in 28 starts for Atlanta and Minnesota last season. He was released by the Braves on July, then

signed with the Twins and went 5-6 with a 5.18 ERA in 15 starts for them.

Colon has 240 career victories in 20 seasons with 10 different teams, including the Montreal Expos. The portly right-hander has posted 21 career wins against Texas, the most by any pitcher.

“Bartolo brings a track record of durability and success in the major leagues. He pounds the strike zone and

provides quality competition for our rotation,” Rangers general manager Jon Daniels said. “Welcome to Texas, Big Sexy!”

A four-time All-Star, he won the 2005 AL Cy Young Award with the Angels.

Texas was 78-84 last year. Rangers pitchers and catchers are set to hold their first spring workout Feb 15 in Surprise, Arizona.

scored for the Canadiens, who were coming off a win over Anaheim on Saturday. Mike Hoffman scored for the Senators, who had won their previous two games, including a shootout victory Saturday in Philadelphia.

Montreal outshot Ottawa 35-26.

After a listless opening period for both teams, Hoffman opened the scoring 2:05 into the second when he picked off a soft David Schlemko pass at the Montreal blue line and beat Carey Price with a wrist shot from the slot.

The Canadiens scored twice after Mark Borowiecki was sent off for hooking, followed 34 seconds later by a double high-sticking call on Erik Karlsson.

Petry scored on a blast from the right circle at 6:16. Lehkonen took a Nikita Scherbak pass and lifted the puck over Mike Condon at the side of the net about a minute and a half later.

Plekanec, for his 600th career point, made a back pass to a wide open Lehkonen for a goal into an open

net with 1:18 left in the period. With 3:03 remaining in the game, Thomas Chabot had a pass attempt slide off the

Carolina Hurricanes’ Brock McGinn (23) and San Jose Sharks’ Brenden Dillon (4) duke it out during the second period of an NHL hockey game on Feb 4, in Raleigh, North Carolina. (AP)

heel of his stick and go right to Plekanec alone in from of Condon for an easy goal. Plekanec is the 13th Canadian to reach 600 points.

Sharks 3, Hurricanes 1

In Raleigh, NC, After their worst stretch of the season, the San Jose Sharks are back on the winning track.

Brent Burns had a goal and an assist, and the Sharks beat the Carolina Hurricanes 3-1 on Sunday.

Timo Meier and Chris Tierney scored, and Aaron Dell stopped 29 shots for this first win in two weeks. San Jose never trailed as it won their second straight following a season-high four-game losing streak.

Sebastian Aho scored for the Hurricanes, who missed a chance to move into sole possession of the Eastern Conference’s final playoff spot. Cam Ward made 23 saves and saw his personal three-game win streak snapped.

The Hurricanes were outshot 12-5 in a lethargic first period, by the end of which they trailed 2-1.

Judge doesn’t believe Nasser can be reformed

Ex-USA Gymnastics doctor gets another 40 to 125 years in prison

CHARLOTTE, Michigan, Feb. 5, (RTRS): Former USA Gymnastics doctor Larry Nassar was sentenced to an additional 40 to 125 years in prison on Monday for molesting young female gymnasts, capping weeks of horrifying testimony from nearly 200 victims about his decades of abuse.

Nassar, who previously received a 40-to-175-year sentence in Ingham County, Michigan, for sexual assault, was sentenced in neighboring Eaton County on Monday on a second set of charges. He is also serving a 60-year federal term for child pornography convictions.

The doctor offered a brief apology to his victims on Monday, saying, “The visions of your testimonies will forever be present in my thoughts.”

But Eaton County Circuit Judge Janice Cunningham said Nassar had again suggested in a pre-sentencing interview with authorities that his conduct was legitimate medical treatment.

“I am not convinced that you truly understand that what you did was wrong, and the devastating impact that you have had on the victims, their families and friends,” she told Nassar. “Clearly you are in denial. You don’t get it.”

As Cunningham delivered Nassar’s sentence on Monday, Rachael Denhollander, the first woman to make her

allegations of abuse public in 2016, smiled broadly and squeezed her husband’s hand. After Nassar was led out in handcuffs, a parade of victims lined up to hug and thank Denhollander.

“I’m just ready for it to be over,” Bailey Lorenzen, who was abused by Nassar as a preteen gymnast, told Reuters. “It’s finally done.”

Athletes were drawn to Nassar for treatment due to his reputation as the go-to doctor for Olympic gymnasts. He disguised his digital penetration of victims as “intravaginal adjustment,” a legitimate treatment sometimes used to relieve pain.

In both Ingham and Eaton counties, girls and women gave wrench-



KFH representatives participating in honouring one of the winners.

Bank applauded for supporting national events

KFH participates in closing ceremony of Kuwait Int’l Arabian Horse Fest

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: Kuwait Finance House (KFH) participated in the 7th Kuwait International Arabian Horse Festival 2018 held at Bait al-Arab Arabian Horse Center in Kuwait under the auspices of His Highness the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah. This comes as part of the bank’s continuing efforts

to support the major events and international forums held in Kuwait.

Representing His Highness the Amir at the closing ceremony was the Minister of Amiri Diwan Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah.

The festival started with the national anthem and presentation of the participating horses.

Sheikh Ali Jarrah Al-Sabah distributed prizes to the winners of the championship. The festival attracts huge number of visitors locally and globally.

KFH was praised in recognition of its main sponsorship and keenness to participate in the national events as part of its social responsibility.



Larry Nassar listens as he is sentenced by Judge Janice Cunningham for three counts of criminal sexual assault in Eaton County Circuit Court on Feb 5, in Charlotte, Michigan. (AFP)

Woodland downs Reavie in playoff to win Phoenix title

Langley wins Panama Championship

LOS ANGELES, Feb 5, (Agencies): Gary Woodland birdied three of the last four holes of regulation then beat Chez Reavie with a par at the first playoff hole on Sunday to win the US PGA Tour Phoenix Open.

Woodland had nine birdies in his seven-under par 64 at TPC Scottsdale and was in the clubhouse with the lead on 18-under par 266.

But Reavie closed with back-to-back birdies to force sudden death.

They returned to the par-four 18th where Woodland was in a fairway bunker and Reavie in the fairway off the tee.

Reavie’s second shot missed the green, and his chip left him a tough putt for par while Woodland blasted out of the bunker to the edge of the green and putted to within two feet.

Reavie, who drained a 21-footer at 18 in regulation to force the playoff, missed his par-saving attempt.

That left Woodland to tap in for his third US PGA Tour title, and his first since 2013.

“It’s been a long five years, but it’s been



Gary Woodland poses with the trophy after winning the Waste Management Phoenix Open at TPC Scottsdale on Feb 4, in Scottsdale, Arizona. (AFP)

De Kock adds to SA’s injury woes

Bangladesh bolster batting for second ‘Sri Lanka Test’

DHAKA, Feb 5, (Agencies): Bangladesh have included batsman Sabbir Rahman for the second Test against Sri Lanka to strengthen their batting in the absence of injured all-rounder Shakib Al Hasan, a team official said Monday.

Shakib will miss the second Test starting Thursday in Dhaka after he failed to recover from a finger injury that kept him out of the opening match.

Sabbir, who played 10 Tests to score 480 runs at an average of 26.66, was ignored for the first game after he failed to live up to expectations in the one-day tri-series last month.

The two-Test series remained locked at 0-0 after the first match ended in a draw in Chittagong on Sunday.

“The wicket of Dhaka is much different than Chittagong. So we thought an extra batsman might be useful. This is why we included Sabbir,” said chief selector Minhajul Abedin.

The home side dropped left-arm spinner Sunzamul Islam and pace bowler Rubel Hossain but retained Abdur Razzak and uncapped off-break bowler Naeem Hasan in the 15-man squad.

Sunzamul claimed just one wicket in the just-concluded Test, giving away 153 runs in his 45 overs in Sri Lanka’s only innings.

Rubel did not play the first Test.

Mahmudullah Riyad will continue as captain in the absence of regular skipper Shakib.

Squad: Mahmudullah Riyad (Capt), Tamim Iqbal, Liton Das, Mushfiqur Rahim, Mominul Haque, Inrul Kayes, Mosaddek Hossain, Tai-

CRICKET

jul Islam, Mustafizur Rahman, Mehedi Hasan, Kamrul Islam, Sabbir Rahman, Abdur Razzak, Naeem Hasan, and Tanbir Hayder.

South Africa’s worrisome injury-list has been lengthened after wicketkeeper-batsman Quinton de Kock was ruled out for up to four weeks with a wrist injury, officials said on Monday.

De Kock joins stalwarts Faf du Plessis, Dale Steyn and AB de Villiers on the sidelines, though the latter is expected to resume training in the next few days.

De Kock was injured during South Africa’s heavy nine-wicket loss to India in the second match of their six-game series in Pretoria on Sunday which the hosts lost to go down 2-0 ahead of the third fixture in Cape Town on Wednesday.

Wozniacki maintains slender lead

Kvitova closes in on return to top 20

PARIS, Feb 5, (AFP): Two-time Wimbledon champion Petra Kvitova moved to the brink of a return to the world’s top 20 on Monday, after winning the Saint Petersburg title at the weekend.

The 27-year-old Czech fell out of the top 20 in the rankings last year for the first time since January 2011, but has jumped eight places to 21st.

Former world number two Kvitova beat defending champion Kristina Mladenovic in the final in Russia to claim only her second WTA title since suffering a hand injury in a knife attack in December 2016.

Australian Open champion Caroline Wozniacki maintains her slender lead at the top of the rankings from Simona Halep, despite losing to Russian Daria Kasatkina in the Saint Petersburg quarter-finals.

Germany’s Julia Goerges broke into the



Kvitova

world’s top 10 for the first time despite a semi-final defeat by Kvitova, gaining two spots and taking the place of Frenchwoman Mladenovic.

WTA rankings on Feb 5

1. Caroline Wozniacki (DEN) 7,965 pts
2. Simona Halep (ROM) 7,616
3. Elina Svitolina (UKR) 5,835
4. Garbine Muguruza (ESP) 5,690
5. Karolina Pliskova (CZE) 5,445
6. Jelena Ostapenko (LAT) 5,000
7. Caroline Garcia (FRA) 4,495
8. Venus Williams (USA) 4,277
9. Angelique Kerber (GER) 3,031
10. Julia Goerges (GER) 2,900 (+2)
11. Johanna Konta (GBR) 2,825
12. Sloane Stephens (USA) 2,813 (+1)
13. Kristina Mladenovic (FRA) 2,770 (-3)
14. Madison Keys (USA) 2,644
15. Anastasija Sevastova (LAT) 2,540
16. Ashleigh Barty (AUS) 2,486
17. Coco Vandeweghe (USA) 2,434 (+1)
18. Magdalena Rybarikova (SVK) 2,363 (+1)
19. Svetlana Kuznetsova (RUS) 2,362 (-2)
20. Elise Mertens (BEL) 2,215

Selected

21. Petra Kvitova (CZE) 2,187 (+8)

ABK send 2 lucky Visa cardholders to 2018 FIFA World Cup in Russia

KUWAIT CITY, Feb 5: As the most awaited sporting event in the world, 2018 FIFA World Cup™, approaches, Al Ahli Bank of Kuwait (ABK) is collaborating with Visa, the world’s leader in digital payments, to reward two lucky ABK Visa cardholders with all-inclusive packages to attend the semifinal match in Russia through its newest spend-and-win campaign. The campaign will start from Feb 1, 2018 and will last till March 31, 2018.

In order to be eligible to win, participants must hold one of ABK’s Visa cards: ABK Visa credit card, ABK Visa prepaid card and ABK Visa debit card, which has been issued before Feb 1, 2018. In addition, ABK Visa cardholders are required to spend a minimum of KD 100 to qualify for the draw. For every KD 10 spent locally, participants will get 1 draw point while every KD 10 spent overseas will grant them 3 draw points. The more points the custom-

er accumulates, the higher the chances of winning.

Commenting on the campaign, ABK said they were delighted to offer loyal customers an exclusive opportunity to attend the most popular sporting event in the world that only happens every four years. With four Arab countries participating in the 2018 FIFA World Cup™, the event is all the more special.

Winners of the campaign will be announced on April 11, 2018, and will be entitled to one package respectively. Each package will include two Emirates flight tickets, accommodation for two for the duration of 4 nights/5 days, in addition to 2 FIFA World Cup™ semifinal game tickets and one ABK Visa Prepaid card loaded with \$450.

For more information about ABK, please visit eahli.com or contact an ABK customer service agent via ‘Ahlan Ahli’ at 1899899.



FIFA 2018 Visa Offer

Hockey pioneer hopes to inspire black kids

Jordan Greenway, the first African-American US Olympic ice hockey player, hopes to inspire black youth to his sport the way Tiger Woods did in golf or Serena Williams has in tennis. "I just really want kids out there to do something different, go against the colour barrier in the sports world," Greenway said. "You see African-American players in other sports like basketball and football. I want kids to feel all right to go try something different."

The 20-year-old Boston University star forward is one of four collegians on the US roster and helped the Americans win the 2017 World Junior Championships, scoring three goals and setting up five more.

"It's a proud feeling to win a gold medal for the USA and I want to have that feeling again on the biggest stage," Greenway said. "Winning a gold medal is a feeling you can't put into words. That's motivating me every day to work hard. I couldn't be more excited. I always had a dream to play in the Olympics. I didn't think it was going to happen." Greenway has his chance because the National Hockey League, which had shut down for every Winter Olympics since 1998 so players could compete in the Games, decided against the move this season, opening the door for Europe-based talent, minor-leaguers and top collegians. (AFP)



A worker uses a chainsaw to work on a large ice sculpture being built near the Pyeongchang Olympic Plaza as preparations continue for the 2018 Winter Olympics in Pyeongchang, South Korea on Feb 5. (AP)



Duhamel, Radford focused squarely on Pyeongchang Olympics

Many big-name skaters head to Winter Games for final time



In this Nov 24, 2017 file photo, Meagan Duhamel (right), and Eric Radford (left), of Canada, perform during the pairs short program at the Bridgestone Skate America in Lake Placid, NY. (AP)

NEW YORK, Feb 5, (AP): Meagan Duhamel and Eric Radford are focused squarely on the Pyeongchang Olympics, where the pairs team from Canada will contend for a gold medal inside Gangneung Ice Arena in the next couple of weeks.

That hasn't stopped them from pondering what will happen afterward.

The 32-year-old Duhamel and 33-year-old Radford, two-time world champions, are under no pretenses that this isn't their final major competition. They may continue to compete after the Winter Games, and both have expressed an interest in exhibition skating, but South Korea will in many ways serve as an exclamation point on their impressive careers.

"As we've advanced in our career and become more experienced, and wiser — I think it's a cliché but the story of our careers is that anything is possible if you don't give up," Radford said. "You hear that all

the time but we're an example of pure determination and hard work making success happen."

As the Olympics approach, Duhamel and Radford aren't the only figure skaters reflecting on their careers. Nor are they the only ones pondering what will come next after South Korea.

There's three-time world champion

FIGURE SKATING

Patrick Chan of Canada and his teammate Keegan Messing, both of whom are likely participating in their last Olympics. Two-time world champ and reigning European champion Javier Fernandez of Spain, at 26 one of the gold medal favorites, also could be competing in his final Winter Games.

That's just the men's competition. While 15-year-old Russian Alina Zagi-

tova stands at one end of the ladies' spectrum, there is 31-year-old Carolina Kostner at the other. The Italian is a former world champion, five-time European champ and a strong contender to land on the podium in her last Olympics.

Duhamel and Radford are among the pairs favorites along with two other established teams: Aliona Savchenko, who just turned 34, and 29-year-old Bruno Massot are five-time world champions for Germany, and 30-year-old Vanessa James and her partner, 26-year-old Morgan Cipres, give France a chance.

In ice dance, Canadian favorites Tessa Virtue and Scott Moir returned from a brief retirement to take another shot at gold. The 28-year-old Virtue and 30-year-old Moir stood on the top step of the podium at the 2010 Vancouver Games, then took silver four years later at the Sochi Games.

"It's hard not to be sentimental at this

point in our season and careers, when you're near the end," Virtue said. "This whole comeback process has been so fulfilling and rewarding. We're trying to embrace it all, the pressure and anxiety and stress that is building."

"This is the year we've been dreaming and thinking about for a long time," added Virtue, who along with Moir will carry Canada's flag into the opening ceremony. "It's here and it's imminent, so we're trying to remember this is such a privilege. We're in a fabulous position. We just have to embrace it all, the highs and lows, and be present for every step."

There is always turnover in figure skating, especially when top competitors are often teenagers that already have peaked by their early 20s. But often those stars flame out away from the Olympic ice, between cycles, and it can happen so quickly that they are never given a proper sendoff.

Olympics Roundup

Setbacks make Olympics sweeter for American

‘Bruised, not beaten’, White back for another shot at gold

NEW YORK, Feb 5, (Agencies): The picture on Shaun White's phone is not for public consumption. His upper lip is a torn up mash of blood and gristle and bone.

He took the selfie shortly after bashing his face into a halfpipe while training in New Zealand last October. It was an accident that forced him to be whisked off the mountain in a helicopter and into a hospital for surgery to reconstruct the area from the bottom of his nose to the top of his lip.

Though White called it more of a nuisance than anything career-threatening — "I had a moment where I was like, 'Really? This is so uncalled for,'" he said — the rehab was awkward and painful. He needed 62 stitches. A therapist had to spend hours reaching inside his lip and massaging the area to break up scar tissue.

"I'm still waiting for what's to be learned from it," White says.

To outsiders, though, it's easy. The picture and the video of the accident that he recently released on social media serve as jarring reminders about the hurdles the world's most famous snowboarder has been willing to climb to return to the top, which would mean winning an Olympic gold medal later this month in South Korea.

"The fact he overcame that and even made the team, and made it in the fashion he did, is one of the best sports stories I've ever seen, heard about and, luckily, been a part of," says JJ Thomas, the Olympic bronze medalist who now serves as White's coach/riding buddy. "It's been pretty impressive watching him overcome the mental hurdles, from just coming back to snowboarding after that and doing basic tricks, to winning that Snowmass event with a 100."

Meanwhile, everything was telling Casey Andringa his Winter Olympic dream was doomed, from a deathly ill meningitis bout to two knee injuries and a World Cup snub despite his best results.

But after a summer living out of a small camper and a whirlwind month of success, the 22-year-old American will live his dream Friday in moguls qualifying — freestyle skiing — before walking in the opening ceremony in Pyeongchang.

"There aren't words to put to the emotions — everything I've ever worked for and dreamed about coming together in a month," Andringa said Monday.

"I don't think I'd have been here without the injuries and the setbacks. It taught me how to rise up and beat the odds."

Andringa won two US qualifying races in December to earn a chance at his World Cup debut, then placed seventh at Calgary and fifth on home snow at Deer Valley to grab an Olympic berth.

"When I say it out loud it sounds crazy," Andringa said. "No one expected me to be here. Nobody. It has been a heck of a haul."

□ □ □

Olympics chief **Thomas Bach** on Monday said the Pyeongchang Winter Games have brought "real hope" to the divided Korean peninsula — and added there was no "Plan B" even when nuclear tensions put them under threat.

Bach was speaking four days ahead of the opening of the Games, which received a major boost when isolated North Korea ended months of bellicose posturing by agreeing to send a contingent of athletes.

"The Olympic Winter Games Pyeongchang 2018 have allowed another new beginning on the Korean peninsula," Bach told delegates at the opening ceremony for this week's International Olympic Committee session.

"They have opened the door for a peaceful dialogue between the Republic of Korea and the Democratic People's Republic of Korea."

"The Olympic spirit has brought two sides together that for too long were divided by mistrust and animosity. The Olympic spirit has brought real hope for a brighter future for everyone on the Korean peninsula."

□ □ □

North and South Korea face a widening linguistic divide after 70 years of division,

and that is a challenge for the rivals' first-ever joint Olympic team as it prepares for the Pyeongchang Winter Games.

The Canadian coach of the joint women's hockey team said Monday her squad has made a three-page dictionary that translates key hockey terms from English into South Korean and then into North Korean for better communication among the players and herself.

Sarah Murray said: "In North Korean, there are no English words so everything is totally different. So we actually made a dictionary, English to Korean to North Korean."

South Korea has incorporated many English words and phrases into its language, while North Korea has eliminated words with foreign origins and created homegrown substitutes.

□ □ □

As American sport reels from a horrifying sexual abuse scandal, athletes competing in this month's Pyeongchang Olympics will have access to trauma units for the first time in Games history.

The Winter Olympics open in South Korea on Friday after long-time USA Gymnastics team doctor **Larry Nassar** was sentenced to up to 175 years in prison for molesting young athletes in a case that sparked universal shock and anger.

Four counselling centres have been set up by local organisers to offer medical and psychological care to athletes subjected to harassment or abuse.

Legal advice will also be on hand to help victims file a police report, according to Games officials.

"We have to protect our athletes and help them avoid and manage any situation," said International Olympic Committee (IOC) safeguarding officer **Susan Greinig**.

"It's important to raise awareness. If you learn about something you feel more in control," said the IOC medical officer, who said national sports federations also recognise more work needs to be done to tackle sexual abuse.

□ □ □

Sub-zero temperatures could be a real issue for visitors in Pyeongchang for this month's Winter Olympics, but while Games fans shivered, athletes on Monday welcomed the cold.

With freezing temperatures of minus 10 degrees celsius in the day and around minus 20 (minus four degrees fahrenheit) during the night it could prove challenging for the last week of preparation before the opening on Friday.

In Pyeongchang, big coats, gloves and good shoes were a must to face the cold, enhanced by strong winds. One student from Seoul, on holiday with his parents, said even South Koreans weren't used to such low temperatures.



In this Feb 11, 2014 file photo, Shaun White, of the United States, hits the edge of the halfpipe during the men's snowboard halfpipe final at the Rosa Khutor Extreme Park, at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Krasnaya Polyana, Russia. (AP)



Lee Seung-hee (left), and Yoon Hyeong-wook perform gugak, Korean traditional music, at the opening ceremony of the 132nd IOC session ahead of the 2018 Winter Olympics in Gangneung, South Korea on Feb 5. (AP)

No Olympics for Russians who had ‘life bans’ lifted

CAS's Coates responds to Bach over IOC concerns

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea, Feb 5, (AFP): Fifteen Russians whose life bans for doping were lifted last week have been barred from the Pyeongchang Winter Games, the International Olympic Committee said on Monday, as Russia's drugs conspiracy continued to reverberate just days from the opening ceremony.

The decision was taken after a special panel "unanimously recommended that the IOC not extend an invitation to the Olympic Winter Games Pyeongchang 2018 to the 15 individuals", a statement said.

"The OAR IG (Olympic Athlete from Russia Implementation Group) confirmed that no additional invitations will be extended to these 15 individuals," the IOC said.

The 15 were among a group of 28 Russians who had been banned for life from the Olympics for doping, but whose suspensions were overturned at the Court of Arbitration for Sport on Thursday.

They included 13 athletes and two ex-athletes now working as support staff. The other members of the 28 have either retired or are unavailable for undisclosed reasons.

The IOC has barred Russia from the Pyeongchang Olympics, which open on Friday, over a widespread doping conspiracy. But 169 Russians who have passed strict anti-doping protocols will compete under a neutral flag.

The announcement comes after the body's president, Thomas Bach, slammed the CAS decision and called for reforms to the independent sports tribunal.

Bach kept up his attack on Monday, when he told reporters: "This CAS decision is extremely disappointing and needs a very careful review. We will clearly review it. If we can appeal it we will appeal it."

The World Anti-Doping Agency has also

Weibrecht chases hat-trick of Oly podiums

PYEONGCHANG, South Korea, Feb 5, (AFP): American Super-G ski star Andrew Weibrecht comes to Pyeongchang seeking his third consecutive Winter Olympic podium and he's just as unfancied now as he was before.

Weibrecht hasn't stood on a World Cup podium in more than two years and has been hampered by a nagging left knee injury — just the sort of low-key level that came before his prior Olympic heroics.

"I've had two great Olympics before and I'm excited to be back," Weibrecht said Monday. "I've been dealing with some issues with my knee. I'm just going to go put out the best performance I can."

But the veteran nicknamed "War Horse" hinted there might be another gallop to glory within him.

"I've had two good weeks of training coming in here, possibly the best I've had this season," Weibrecht said. "I'm going to give it my best shot."

expressed "serious concern" over the decision by CAS, which said it had insufficient evidence to leave the bans in place.

And Canadian luge athlete Sam Edney, who was robbed of a 2014 Olympic medal when the bans were overturned, called the uncertainty "a nightmare for clean athletes".

Australia's John Coates, president of the court's governing body, said the tribunal would "thoroughly examine" the concerns raised by Bach and would issue details of the

decisions as soon as possible.

"Athletes are entitled to have confidence in judicial processes at all levels, more particularly before the CAS," Coates said in a statement.

The IOC's Invitation Review Panel, which looked into the cases of the Russians, said it had "additional information" including data from a leaked database which showed "traces of prohibited substances (and) evidence of steroid profile manipulation".

"The panel agreed that the decision of the CAS had not lifted the suspicion of doping or given the panel sufficient confidence to recommend to the OAR IG that those 13 athletes could be considered as clean," the IOC said.

It is the second successive Olympics where the IOC has been embroiled in problems involving Russian doping, after accusations of systemic drug cheating blew up just before Rio 2016.

Russia topped the medals table when it hosted the Sochi 2014 Winter Olympics. But it later emerged that dirty samples involving its athletes were switched using a "mouse-hole" in the anti-doping laboratory's wall.

At Rio, the IOC stopped short of banning Russia and instead left the decision on their participation up to individual sports federations, creating some confusion in the build-up to the Games.

Bach also heavily criticised WADA at the time and called for its reform, complaining about the timing of the anti-doping body's report into Russia's drugs conspiracy.



International Olympic Committee President Thomas Bach speaks during the opening ceremony of the 132nd IOC session prior to the Pyeongchang 2018 Winter Olympic Games on Feb 5, in Gangneung. (AFP)



Players and match officials pay attention as an official delivers a speech.

First Kuwait Wheelchair Basketball Tournament concludes

The First Kuwait Wheelchair Basketball for the Handicapped Tournament will conclude Tuesday at the hall of Kuwait Disabled Sport Club.

The club organized the three-day tournament. On the final day, the first match will start at 4:00 pm to determine the third and fourth placers; whereas the final match will kick off at 5:30 pm, followed by the closing ceremony and distribution of prizes.

Secretary-General of the club Abdullah Al-Azmi invited the public to watch the matches on the final day, adding that the organizing committee prepared prizes and gifts for the fans.

Al-Azmi revealed the closing ceremony will be held with official presence and high-level sports

representation. He affirmed the tournament achieved its objectives such as the distinguished celebration for the club coinciding with the National Day, Liberation Day and 12th anniversary of HH the Amir Sheikh Sabah Al-Ahmad Al-Jaber Al-Sabah's ascension to power.

He pointed out the tournament serves as an important station for programs and equipping the national team players to enter West Asia.

He also extended his gratitude and appreciation to Abdullah Al-Jasser (Aboudka) for his support as host of the tournament.

Meanwhile, on the second day of the tournament, the Lakers Team defeated Olympics by 63/48; while Aboudka defeated the Liberation by 49/47. With these results, the Lak-

ers obtained comfortable winning points in the tournament's chart as it won all its matches with a huge margin, qualifying them to win the tournament's title.

Also, the second day witnessed recreational competition for the crowd — male and female, which took place between the two matches. The women raced on the wheelchair and the men competed in shooting hoops while seated on wheelchairs.

Aboudka, the tournament sponsor, handed out cash prizes to the winners. He pointed out the competition was aimed at familiarizing the crowd of able people with the efforts needed by a disabled person to play on wheelchair and the value of their achievements in the sports for the disabled.

Morocco whip 10-man Nigeria for title

El Kaabi hits 9th goal

CASABLANCA, Morocco, Feb 5, (AFP): Ayoub el Kaabi scored his ninth goal of the 2018 African Nations Championship (CHAN) as Morocco became the first hosts to triumph by thrashing 10-man Nigeria 4-0 Sunday in a Casablanca downpour.

With Nigeria in disarray and the final long over as a contest, the previously little known striker completed his record-extending goal haul by firing into the net from close range.

Zakaria Hadraf put the home team ahead at Stade Mohammed V on the stroke of half-time and added the match-clinching third goal midway through the second half.

In between the first goals of the tournament for Hadraf, fellow midfielder Mohamed el Karti netted soon after Nigerian attacker Eneji Moses was red-carded following a second caution.

Before the biennial tournament kicked off last month, Achraf Bencharki from 2017 CAF Champions League winners Wydad Casablanca was the centre of attention.

His five goals were instrumental in the success of Wydad and he was expected to spearhead the Moroccan CHAN challenge.

But Bencharki was a shock absentee from the line-up for the tournament opener while lone striker El Kaabi bagged a brace in a 4-0 mauling of Mauritania.

He followed up with a hat-trick — only the third in the history of the

SOCCER

tournament — against Guinea, put one past Namibia and scored twice in the semi-final victory over Libya.

His nine goals comfortably surpassed the previous record of five from Zambian Given Singuluma in the first CHAN finals nine years ago.

El Kaabi helped Racing Casablanca win promotion to the Moroccan top flight last season, then joined Renaissance Berkane, a relatively successful but low-profile elite division outfit.



Morocco's players hold up the trophy as they celebrate after winning the final football match of the African Nations Championship against Nigeria at the Mohammed V Casablanca Stadium on Feb 4. (AFP)

Soccer Roundup

Di Biagio to coach Italy in March friendlies

MediaPro to pay 1.05bn euros a yr for Serie A rights

ROME, Feb 5, (Agencies): The Italian league announced on Monday that the domestic television rights for Serie A games for the period 2018 to 2021 have been sold to Spanish group MediaPro for 1.05 billion euros (\$1.3 billion) a year.

"The offer of 1,050,001,000 euros, is superior to the minimum requested in the invitation to tender," Lega Serie A said in a statement, with MediaPro's offer enough for them to beat traditional broadcast partners Sky and Mediaset.

The announcement comes after the Italian league rejected the offers made by Sky and Mediaset at the end of January, judging the total amount of 830 million euros to be insufficient.

The two groups currently share the domestic television rights, paying 945 million euros per year for the period 2015 to 2018.

Lega Serie A wanted at least 1.05 billion euros a year for the new deal, and MediaPro's offer goes 1,000 euros over that mark.

The international rights for Serie A were attributed in October to IMG and Rai, the Italian national public broadcaster, for a total of 371 million euros per year for the three years to 2021. That is double the previous amount.



Di Biagio

Italy Under-21 coach Luigi Di Biagio will coach the senior side on a caretaker basis for the friendlies against Argentina and England in March, the Italian federation (FIGC) said on Monday.

Italy have been without a coach since Gian Piero Ventura resigned in November after they failed to qualify for the World Cup for the first time since 1958.

Di Biagio, 46, is a former midfielder who won 31 caps for Italy and played at the 1998 and 2002 World Cups and Euro 2000. His club career included spells at Inter Milan and AS Roma as well as Monza, Foggia, Brescia and Ascoli.

He coached Italy's Under-20 team between 2011 and 2013 and has led the Under-21 side from 2013 onwards.

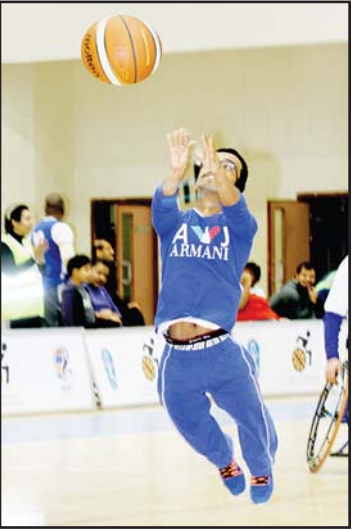
Italy play Argentina in Manchester on March 23 and England at Wembley four days later.

The FIGC is itself without a president after Carlo Tavecchio resigned in November and the election for his replacement last week failed to find a winner.

Roberto Fabbri, general secretary of the Italian Olympic Committee, was appointed FIGC commissioner on an emergency basis.

Earlier on Monday, Fabbri told state broadcaster RAI the search for a long-term coach was complicated because many candidates had contracts with clubs abroad.

"If these people do not make themselves free, it becomes diplomatically difficult to go and ask them to consider the possibility of leading the national team," he said.



A player goes for a basket.

London to host new 8-nation World Cup

LONDON, Feb 5, (RTRS): A new World Cup event featuring eight leading athletics nations and intended to attract a wider audience to the sport will take place in London this year, British Athletics said on Monday.

Britain and the United States will compete along with South Africa, Poland, France, China, Germany and Jamaica in the inaugural World Cup from July 14-15 at London Stadium, venue for the 2012 Olympic athletics events and last year's world championships.

"This is one of the exciting innovative events we are seeing in our sport and our thanks go to British Athletics and the Mayor of London for creating it and hosting it," International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) President Sebastian Coe said in a statement.

"We have 8 lanes, 8 top nations, 8 teams and a host of world class athletes lining up in each event to win the trophy and prize pot. This will be a fast-paced and exhilarating experience for athletes and fans."

One male and one female athlete from each nation will be selected for every field event and each track race up to 1,500 metres, with the total prize pot set at \$2 million over two evening sessions.

UK Athletics Chairman Richard Bowker said the World Cup event was an extension of the original idea to host a competition between Britain and the US.

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Viewers found it insulting to memory of MLK

Ad using Martin Luther King speech draws backlash

ATLANTA, Feb 5, (RTRS): A TV commercial shown during the Super Bowl that used the voice of the late Martin Luther King Jr to advertise pickup trucks drew criticism from viewers who found it insulting to the memory of the revered civil rights leader.

The ad for Dodge Ram trucks, seen by millions of football fans during the game's second quarter, uses audio from the last major speech King gave before his assassination in 1968.

"He who is greatest among you shall be your servant," King's resonant voice is heard saying over images of firefighters, teachers and working men and women with their trucks helping people.

Reactions came before the game ended.

"I want to punch that Dodge commercial in the face," wrote one Twitter user with the handle sreeker.

Lawyer Cat posted on Twitter: "I'm no civil rights scholar, but I'm pretty sure MLK never had a dream to be featured in a Dodge Ram commercial."

Others placed messages of support on Dodge Ram's Facebook page. User Justin Newman posted: "Well done, and a great commercial."

Another Facebook user posted: "Lifelong RAM owner. You've made me proud."

But the backlash remarks were in the majority. "Martin Luther King did not march in Selma so you could use his speech to sell trucks," Lori Borgen posted on the company's Facebook page.

Representatives from Dodge Ram and parent Fiat Chrysler Automobiles were not immediately available for comment.

The King Center in Atlanta posted



This file photo provided by Ram Truck Brand shows a scene from the company's Super Bowl spot. The Ram truck ad that used a speech by Martin Luther King, Jr, is drawing a backlash. The ad shows people doing service-oriented tasks set against audio of King's speech, which urges people to be 'great' by serving the greater good rather than being successful. But it was criticized by viewers and ad experts alike for forging too tenuous a connection with the civil rights hero. (AP)



This photo provided by T-Mobile shows a scene from the company's Super Bowl spot. For the 2018 Super Bowl, marketers are paying more than \$5 million per 30-second spot to capture the attention of more than 110 million viewers. (AP)

NFL Roundup

Shazier regains movement

49ers, Garoppolo close to extension

WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (RTRS): General manager John Lynch made it clear the San Francisco 49ers did not want Jimmy Garoppolo to get away. Now he's putting the franchise's money behind that statement.

NFL Network reported Sunday the 49ers and Garoppolo's agent, Don Yee, are progressing toward a multi-year deal. The contract is likely to be worth well over \$100 million.



Garoppolo

Lynch said during the Senior Bowl that the 49ers were doing everything possible to lock up Garoppolo, who was a revelation at quarterback following a trade in October from the New England Patriots.

"When you find the right guy at that position, it's really good for your franchise," Lynch said. "We believe we've found the right guy. Now the challenge is getting Jimmy signed. We're working hard towards that. We'll see. I think he wants to be with us and we want him there. I think it makes too much sense not to happen. So it's just a matter of getting it done."

Entering the final year of his rookie contract, **New York Giants** wide receiver **Odell Beckham Jr** hopes to work out an extension this offseason and ensure his future with the team that drafted him 12th overall in 2014.

"Hopefully to get it done," Beckham said when asked about his mindset regarding an extension at Saturday's NFL Honors show. "It's that time just to get it over with. I really want to do it so I can move past it."

"It's too much sitting around thinking, 'Where am I going to be at?' I need to know where I can

start buying furniture for a house. I want to have a place set where I know, 'OK, this is home. I can always go back to home.' So it's just a little intermediate process right now. I'm sure it will get worked out."

Pittsburgh Steelers linebacker **Ryan Shazier** has regained movement in his legs and is engaging in a regular walking routine as his recovery from a severe spine injury continues, ESPN's **Adam Schefter** reported Sunday.

Shazier was discharged from the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center on Thursday, almost two months since he underwent spine stabilization surgery after suffering a spinal injury on a routine tackle against the Cincinnati Bengals.

Kirk Cousins might not be cleared to check out of Washington just yet.

ESPN reported Sunday that the Redskins are discussing using the franchise tag to retain Cousins for the purpose of seeking a trade to recoup assets after agreeing to a deal earlier this week to acquire **Alex Smith** from the **Kansas City Chiefs**. Teams can utilize the franchise tag from Feb 20 through March 6.

Cousins could not be traded unless he signs the franchise tender, which would be worth \$34.5 million for the 2018 season. Cousins could also undo pending trades by telling suitors he will not sign a long-term extension, lessening the desire of any interested team to part with draft picks or other players via trade.

Former **Washington Redskins** general manager **Scot McCloughan** has agreed to join the **Cleveland Browns'** staff as a personnel consultant to help with the 2018 NFL Draft, sources told ESPN's **Chris Mortensen**.

New Browns GM **John Dorsey** continues adding experience to his staff leading up to the draft.

Super Bowl audience dips from last year, early data shows

NEW YORK, Feb 5, (RTRS): The US television audience for Sunday's Super Bowl championship game of the National Football League on Comcast Corp's NBC dropped nearly 3 percent from last year, preliminary data by the Nielsen ratings agency showed on

Monday.

About 47.4 percent of households in 56 major markets tuned in to watch the underdog Philadelphia Eagles defeat the New England Patriots, the early Nielsen data released by NBC showed, down from 48.8 percent

a year earlier.

Updated ratings, including a total audience number, will be released later on Monday.

The Super Bowl traditionally ranks as the year's most-watched event on US television. Last year's game, broadcast by Twenty-First

Century Fox Inc and which included a thrilling overtime finish, drew 111.3 million viewers.

Television ratings are being closely watched after the audience for National Football League games dropped almost 10 percent during the regular season.

on Twitter early on Monday that it did not approve the advertisement.

"Neither @TheKingCenter nor @BerniceKing is the entity that approves the use of #MLK's words or imagery for use in merchandise, entertainment (movies, music, artwork, etc) or advertisement, including tonight's @Dodge #SuperBowl commercial," the tweet

read.

But King's estate, not the non-profit King Center, controls the civil rights leader's speeches and recordings. Neither representatives for the estate nor King's surviving children were immediately available for comment.

Ram Trucks representatives told

ABC News, Forbes and other media that the company had received all the necessary permissions.

"Estate representatives were a very important part of the creative process," a Ram Trucks official told Slate.com.

The use of King's speeches, images and personal papers and items including his Bible and Nobel Peace prize

are closely guarded by the estate and the subject of a long-running public feud among King's surviving children.

Last April, PepsiCo Inc pulled a commercial featuring model Kendall Jenner using a can of the soft drink to ease tensions between protesters and riot police after the ad prompted outrage and ridicule.



Charlotte Hornets guard Jeremy Lamb (3) drives to the basket as Phoenix Suns' Dragan Bender defends during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Feb 4 in Phoenix. (AP)

Celtics top Blazers at buzzer

Lakers hand Thunder 4th consecutive defeat

BOSTON, Feb 5, (AP): **AI Horford** captured the attention of Boston sports fans even on Super Bowl Sunday.

Horford made a 15-foot fade-away jumper at the buzzer and the Celtics finished off the Portland Trail Blazers 97-96 Sunday.

Horford wound up with 22 points and 10 rebounds, helping Boston win its fourth in a row.

Horford hit a game-winning shot with 3.7 seconds left against Houston earlier this season and also hit a buzzer-beater for Atlanta to beat Washington during the 2013-14 season.

Damian Lillard shot just 6 for 19, but scored Portland's final eight

BASKETBALL

points, including a 3-point play with 7.2 seconds remaining to give the Blazers a 96-95 lead.

Boston trailed 85-79 with 5:37 to go before going on an 11-0 run, sparked by consecutive 3-pointers from Semi Ojeleye, Jayson Tatum and Horford.

Tatum had 17 points and Brown scored 16 for the Celtics.

Terry Rozier had with 11 points on 5-of-18 shooting after recording a triple-double and a career-high 31 points in his previous two games starting in place of Celtics guard Kyrie Irving.

Lakers 108, Thunder 104

In Oklahoma City, Brook Lopez scored 20 points, Julius Randle added 19 and the Lakers handed the Thunder their fourth straight loss.

Jordan Clarkson scored 18 points and Brandon Ingram added 16 for the Lakers, who have won six of eight.

Raptors 101, Grizzlies 86

In Toronto, Delon Wright scored 15 points, and Toronto pulled away in the fourth quarter.

DeMar DeRozan and Fred VanVleet each scored 13 points as the Raptors improved to 21-4 at home. Jonas Valanciunas had 12 points, and Kyle Lowry finished with 11.

Hawks 99, Knicks 96

In New York, Kent Bazemore's 3-pointer with 6.7 seconds left lifted Atlanta to the victory.

NBA Results/Standings

WASHINGTON, Feb 5, (RTRS): Results and standings from the NBA games on Sunday:

Boston	97	Portland	96	Toronto	101	Memphis	86	
Milwaukee	109	Brooklyn	94	LA Lakers	108	Oklahoma City	104	
Atlanta	99	New York	96	Charlotte	115	Phoenix	110	
Eastern Conference				Western Conference				
Atlantic Division				Northwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB	
Boston	39	15	.722	-	34	22	.607	-
Toronto	36	16	.692	2	30	24	.556	3
Philadelphia	25	25	.500	12	29	24	.547	3-1/2
New York	23	31	.426	16	28	25	.528	4-1/2
Brooklyn	19	35	.352	20	24	28	.462	8
Central Division				Pacific Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB	
Cleveland	30	21	.588	-	41	12	.774	-
Milwaukee	29	23	.558	1-1/2	LA Clippers	26	.510	14
Indiana	30	24	.556	1-1/2	LA Lakers	21	.404	19-1/2
Detroit	25	26	.490	5	Phoenix	18	.340	23
Chicago	18	34	.346	12-1/2	Sacramento	16	.308	24-1/2
Southeast Division				Southwest Division				
W	L	PCT	GB	W	L	PCT	GB	
Washington	30	22	.577	-	Houston	38	.745	-
Miami	29	24	.547	1-1/2	San Antonio	34	.618	6
Charlotte	22	29	.431	7-1/2	New Orleans	28	.538	10-1/2
Atlanta	16	37	.302	14-1/2	Memphis	18	.346	20-1/2
Orlando	15	36	.294	14-1/2	Dallas	17	.321	22

The Hawks rallied from a 93-87 deficit in the final 2:16.

Bazemore was wide open in the left corner and hit for a 98-96 lead. Tim Hardaway Jr then stepped on the line trying to inbound, giving the ball back to Atlanta.

Bucks 109, Nets 94

In New York, Eric Bledsoe scored 28 points, John Henson had 19 points and 18 rebounds, and the Bucks easily extended their winning streak over the Nets to 10 games.

Bucks star Giannis Antetokounmpo



Boston Celtics forward Jayson Tatum (0) drives against the defense of Portland Trail Blazers guard Pat Connaughton (5) during the second half of an NBA basketball game on Feb 4 in Boston. (AP)

departed after twisting his right ankle with about 7-1/2 minutes left. He finished with 16 points and eight rebounds.

Khris Middleton also had 16 points for the Bucks, who improved to 6-1 since firing Jason Kidd and moved a season-best six games over .500 at 29-23.

Hornets 115, Suns 110

In Phoenix, Nicolas Batum scored 22 points and Charlotte rallied from a 21-point deficit in the second half.

Kemba Walker and Dwight Howard added 18 apiece for the Hornets, who staged their biggest comeback of the season and matched their season best with three straight wins.

Rookie Josh Jackson scored a career-high 23 and T.J. Warren added 21 for the Suns, who led 78-57 with 7:53 left in the third quarter. Devin Booker and Dragan Bender added 18 apiece.

Suns 115, Hornets 110

In Phoenix, Nicolas Batum scored 22 points and the Charlotte Hornets rallied from a 21-point second-half deficit to beat the Phoenix Suns 115-110 on Sunday.

Kemba Walker and Dwight Howard added 18 apiece for the Hornets, who staged their biggest comeback of the season and matched their season best with three straight wins.

PRIME TIME

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08:30 watford vs chelsea/soccer bein sports 11 hd
09:30 atletico vs valencia/soccer bein sports 3 hd
10:47 bologna vs fiorentina/soccer ... bein sports 4 hd
12:30 juve vs sassuolo/soccer bein sports 4 hd
13:00 mainz vs bayern/soccer bein sports 5 hd
15:45 man utd vs huddersfield/soccer . bein sports 2 hd
17:30 arsenal vs everton/soccer bein sports 2 hd
19:45 verona vs roma/soccer bein sports 4 hd

Sports

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Foles named MVP, Brady throws record 505 passing yards

Eagles soar to first Super Bowl title



Eagles' Jay Ajayi (36) is stopped by New England Patriots' Stephon Gilmore during the first half of the NFL Super Bowl 52 football game on Feb 4, in Minneapolis. (AP)



Philadelphia Eagles' Nick Foles holds up the Vince Lombardi Trophy after the NFL Super Bowl 52 football game against the New England Patriots on Feb 4, in Minneapolis. The Eagles won 41-33. (AP)

Belichick takes blame for Patriots loss

MINNEAPOLIS, Feb 5, (RTRS): For a city that produced one of Hollywood's ultimate underdog stories, the Philadelphia Eagles delivered an equally inspiring script by upsetting the New England Patriots on Sunday for their first Super Bowl title.

The Eagles were underdogs throughout the NFL playoffs, and just as most expected little from fictional Philadelphia boxer Rocky Balboa, few onlookers outside the City of Brotherly Love expected them to beat the defending Super Bowl champions.

But Philadelphia, who embraced their lowly status with some players wearing dog masks throughout the playoffs, stunned New England with a 41-33 victory to cap a remarkable turnaround after finishing last in their division a year ago.

"We've been doubted since Day One," said Eagles tight end Zach Ertz, who caught what proved to be the

FOOTBALL

game-winning touchdown. "This team, no one picked us. We come out here and we're World Champions."

The victory set off a wild celebration among the team's many green-clad supporters who made the trek to chilly Minneapolis, while uplifting music from "Rocky" blared through the speakers above a field covered in silver and green confetti.

The Eagles limped into the post-season with an offense handicapped by a seemingly hopeless backup quarterback following an injury to Carson Wentz in December, but Nick Foles proved more than ready to shine on the game's biggest stage. Foles, who nearly retired after an underwhelming 2015 season with the St Louis Rams, showed no nerves playing in his first Super Bowl and went toe-to-toe with Patriots counterpart Tom Brady, a five-time Super Bowl champion.

"I felt calm," said Foles, who was named the game's Most Valuable Player after throwing three touchdowns. "We felt confident coming in and we just went out there and played football."

The Eagles, who won three championships in the pre-Super Bowl era, had long been a tormented franchise and lost in their only two previous Super Bowl appearances, including to the Patriots in 2005, but dug deep to bring home a championship.

Trailing by a point late in the fourth quarter, the Eagles moved ahead for good when Foles connected with Ertz on a 11-yard touchdown to put his team ahead 38-33.

Philadelphia missed a subsequent two-point conversion attempt to leave



New England Patriots' James White celebrates his shutdown run. (AP)

the door open for the Patriots with a little less than two-and-a-half minutes to play.

But in a game when both offenses moved up and down the field effortlessly and combined for a Super Bowl record 1,151 yards, Brady had the ball swatted from his grasp and it was recovered by Philadelphia to all but seal New England's fate.

The Eagles went on to kick a field goal to extend their lead to eight points and prevented the Patriots from engineering a last-minute, game-tying drive.

Up 15-6, the Eagles had a chance to build a comfortable lead towards the end of the first half but intended receiver Alshon Jeffrey deflected a Foles pass that was intercepted by Patriots defensive back Duron Harmon steps from the end zone. The turnover proved costly as the Patriots marched 90 yards back down the field in less than three minutes, in a drive that was capped by a James White touchdown to pull within 15-12.

However, the Eagles replied with an impressive drive of their own that resulted in a touchdown on a gutsy trick

play on fourth down from the Patriots one-yard line.

The Eagles, opting not to kick a field goal, snapped the ball to rookie running back Corey Clement, who flipped the ball to tight end Trey Burton, who then threw to a wide-open Foles for a walk-in touchdown and a 22-12 half-time lead.

It marked the end of a wild opening half that included missed extra points, a missed field goal and a botched Patriots attempt at a trick play of their own when a wide-open Brady failed to haul in an intended pass.

The Patriots looked poised to collect a record-tying sixth Super Bowl in 17 seasons when Brady threw his third touchdown — this one a short pass to Rob Gronkowski with about nine minutes to play — to give his team their first lead of the game, 33-32.

But the Patriots had no answer for the Foles-led Eagles.

Patriots coach Bill Belichick took the blame for the loss while Gronkowski, who was playing in his first game since suffering a concussion two weeks ago, said he knew his team were going to be in for a battle.

"You just knew that it was going to be a shootout the whole game and it was going to take all 60 minutes," said Gronkowski. "Unfortunately, we just didn't come up with the most opportunities to make to win the game."

Brady finished with a Super Bowl record 505 passing yards and three touchdowns but could not deliver when it mattered most, his desperate pass falling to the ground in the end zone as time expired.

"Losing sucks. That's part of it," said Brady. "You try to win and sometimes you lose. That's the way it goes."

The Patriots now enter an off-season some feel could mark the beginning of the end for their dynasty after ESPN reported in January about a rift between Brady, Belichick and owner Robert Kraft.

The trio have denied reports of any off-field tension but there will be no shortage of attention paid to their every move between now and next season.



Eagles head coach Doug Pederson (left), hugs owner Jeffrey Lurie as they celebrate after beating the New England Patriots. (AP)

List of Super Bowl MVP Winners

NEW YORK, Feb 5, (RTRS): List of Super Bowl Most Valuable Player (MVP) winners:

2018 — Nick Foles (Philadelphia); 2017 — Tom Brady (New England); 2016 — Von Miller (Denver); 2015 — Tom Brady (New England); 2014 — Malcolm Smith (Seattle Seahawks); 2013 — Joe Flacco (Baltimore Ravens); 2012 — Eli Manning (New York Giants); 2011 — Aaron Rodgers (Green Bay).
2010 — Drew Brees (New Orleans); 2009 — Santonio Holmes (Pittsburgh); 2008 — Eli Manning (New York Giants); 2007 — Peyton Manning (Indianapolis); 2006 — Hines Ward (Pittsburgh); 2005 — Deion Branch (New England); 2004 — Tom Brady (New England); 2003 — Dexter Jackson (Tampa Bay); 2002 — Tom Brady (New England); 2001 — Ray Lewis (Baltimore).
2000 — Kurt Warner (St. Louis); 1999 — John Elway (Denver); 1998 — Terrell Davis (Denver); 1997 — Desmond Howard (Green Bay); 1996 — Larry Brown (Dallas); 1995 — Steve Young (San Francisco); 1994 — Emmitt Smith (Dal-

las); 1993 — Troy Aikman (Dallas); 1992 — Mark Rypien (Washington); 1991 — Otis Anderson (New York Giants).

1990 — Joe Montana (San Francisco); 1989 — Jerry Rice (San Francisco); 1988 — Doug Williams (Washington); 1987 — Phil Simms (New York Giants); 1986 — Richard Dent (Chicago); 1985 — Joe Montana (San Francisco); 1984 — Marcus Allen (Los Angeles); 1983 — John Riggins (Washington); 1982 — Joe Montana (San Francisco); 1981 — Jim Plunkett (Oakland).

1980 — Terry Bradshaw (Pittsburgh); 1979 — Terry Bradshaw (Pittsburgh); 1978 — Harvey Martin (Dallas); Randy White (Dallas); 1977 — Fred Biletnikoff (Oakland); 1976 — Lynn Swann (Pittsburgh); 1975 — Franco Harris (Pittsburgh); 1974 — Larry Csonka (Miami); 1973 — Jake Scott (Miami); 1972 — Roger Staubach (Dallas); 1971 — Chuck Howley (Dallas).

1970 — Len Dawson (Kansas City); 1969 — Joe Namath (New York Jets); 1968 — Bart Starr (Green Bay); 1967 — Bart Starr (Green Bay).



Eagles cornerback Jalen Mills (31) breaks up a pass intended for New England Patriots tight end Rob Gronkowski (87). (AP)

Colts player Edwin killed

LOS ANGELES, Feb 5, (AFP): Indianapolis Colts player Edwin Jackson was killed, along with another man, on Sunday when he was struck by a suspected drunk driver near downtown Indianapolis.

Jackson was killed after a black Ford F-150 pickup driven by a 37-year-old man struck both of them as they were standing on the side of a highway, The Indianapolis Star newspaper reported.

Police told the newspaper the incident took place about six kilometres (four miles) southwest of the downtown in the early morning hours when the truck drove into the emergency shoulder where the men were standing outside their stopped vehicle.

"We were heartbroken to hear the news of Edwin Jackson's passing," the Colts said in a news release.

"Edwin was loved by all in the Colts organization. We admired his outgoing personality, competitive spirit and hard-working mentality.

"He was well-respected among all with whom he crossed paths, and he will be greatly missed in our locker room and throughout our entire organization.

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